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# Goethe's Autobiography



# Goethe's Autobiography

POETRY AND TRUTH  
FROM MY OWN LIFE

*By Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

TRANSLATED BY R. O. MOON

PUBLIC AFFAIRS PRESS

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2153 Florida Ave., Washington 8, D. C.

TO  
MY WIFE



## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

On August 28, 1949, the world will celebrate the bicentennial anniversary of the birth of one of the greatest geniuses of modern times—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

Fortunately, this amazing genius has provided us with detailed information about his life. In these pages will be found an account of his childhood, boyhood, and early manhood. To all indications, Goethe began to prepare this work when he was about sixty years old, and, doubtless, he must have trusted largely to his memory, as we know that by that time both his parents were dead and many letters to and from his friends had been lost.

We have here a minute description of the gradual unfolding of the mind of a man of amazing genius, with remarks as to what hindered and what helped his development and how he came to write some of his most famous works, such as 'Götz von Berlichingen,' 'The Sorrows of the Young Werther,' and 'Egmont.' He tells us of the famous men whom he met in his early youth and by whom he was influenced, such as Herder, Lavater, Basedow, Wieland, Klopstock, and Winckelmann (whom, however, he did not actually meet. It should ever be remembered that, apart altogether from his poetry, Goethe was continually



occupied with the art of life, and no one is a better example of how

“Men may rise on stepping stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things.”

Rightly was he spoken of by Matthew Arnold as “the strong, much toiling sage,” and perhaps that unity with himself, after which he was always striving, was not fully arrived at till the final completion of the second part of “Faust,” when he was within a few months of his death.

Of the numerous volumes of his works published to the world, considerably less than half is occupied with poetry. Apart from plays and lyrics, we find novels, short stories, letters on foreign travel, treatises on art and architecture, scientific works on anatomy, botany, and optics. In his life, too, we see the same variety; he appears sometimes as a poet, sometimes as a man of science, or as Minister of State, or courtier, or sage. These numerous activities were not taken up in any dilettante spirit, but with a definite and serious aim. He says that he wrote novels because at that time no one in Germany knew how to write them. “Had there been good novels already,” says Goethe, “I should have written none.” So, too, in science Goethe felt that men of science did not understand the true method of interrogating Nature; and so he studied science himself, not in a superficial and dilettante fashion, but with the zeal and assiduity of a savant, with a view to showing that the secrets of Nature might be reached *a priori* by a sympathetic imagination, while the old method of observation and experiment remained barren of results. So, too, in architecture he was not a dreamer of dreams, but had certain definite ideas which he felt that his countrymen required to be taught.

This wide range of interests and pursuits, however, was not entirely in accordance with his own ideal of what a man ought to do. He tells us somewhere that the true master shows himself by restricting himself and knowing what to reject, instead of ranging over the whole field of literature, science, and art. The object of education should be to discover to people what their own inborn aptitudes really are, so that, by selecting some occupation in which they can best exercise them, they will not only be more useful and effective as citizens, but will be free from the mental restlessness which is depicted in the character of Wilhelm Meister and attain to "an inward harmony." Had Goethe been born in France or England, with their more mature and settled civilisations, we should probably have had more poetry from him, but nothing else. Some people might think this an advantage, but it seems to me there would have been a distinct loss ; for the interest of Goethe lies not only in the matchless poems which he has given to the world, but in the life which he led, in his doubts and struggles with himself, in his lifelong endeavour to bring into harmony the discordant elements of his personality, and his final emergence from those doubts and struggles and ultimate self-mastery. It is here that Goethe appears to be of especial help and value to us. Shakespeare and Dante are so far distant from us in time that we can hardly enter into the conditions of life under which they lived, but Goethe is essentially modern, and the poet almost of our own time.

He was deeply impressed by the richness and attractiveness of life, and, much as he admired Byron, he had very little sympathy with the Byronic despair, though nowhere is there a more brilliant portrayal of

such melancholy than in "The Sorrows of the Young Werther." His function as a poet was to show the full meaning of life and reveal its secret charms in the most unexpected places.

As some people have an eye for dramatic effects in life, so Goethe had an eye for poetic effects, and had the power of bringing what is particular and accidental into harmony with what is universal and essential, and so of dignifying the common things of everyday existence. Thus he tells us, in speaking of some surgical operations which he attended, and which at first filled him with considerable loathing, how he gradually overcame his disgust and learnt from every repellent object to find its ideal aspect. Hence the magic with which he succeeded in imparting a charm and fascination to the simplest things in life, which is very characteristic of his Autobiography. While other poets, he says, were striving to make the ideal real, he always sought to make the real ideal, and to this he attributed his success.

Goethe believed in the life of action. Contemplation of ideals is no substitute for worthy action, but rather the preparation for such. Faust, the hero of his great poem, after the marriage with Helena has to recognise alternately that he is not an independent whole, but a member of a social organism, and so the problems of life cannot be solved by dwelling apart from the world even in company with a spiritual ideal. He becomes, therefore, a social reformer, and in reclaiming waste land from the sea, so that an actively free people might work on the soil which he, with full conscious activity had procured for them, he sees at last his dreams translated into fact, and this brought him the perfect moment.

Unlike Schiller, Goethe had not much sympathy

with philosophy, at least in its formal aspect, neither with Plato nor Aristotle, nor with the new development of German philosophy beginning with Kant. For only one philosopher did he feel a real veneration, and that was Spinoza. But it was not so much Spinoza's intellectual conception of the Universe which attracted him as the grandeur of his moral ideas. Those words of Spinoza, "Whoso loveth God truly must not expect to be loved by Him in return," made a profound impression upon Goethe, and he tells us that throughout his life he had specially aimed at disinterestedness in love and friendship. For those severe critics of Goethe's life, who think that he was not particularly successful in this direction, it may be well to quote the saying of the pure, mystical Jung Stilling: "Goethe's heart, which few know, is as great as his head, which is known to all." The great friendship of Goethe and Schiller is one of the most famous episodes in all literary history. When Goethe heard of Schiller's death he almost succumbed to the blow, and wished that his own end might come. He esteemed Schiller happy, as he had died young in the full vigour of his days: that we could figure him as a youth for ever. "To himself," as Carlyle has said, a different, higher destiny was appointed. Throughout the changes of man's life, onwards to the extreme verge he was to go, and through them all nobly. In youth, flattering of fortune, uninterrupted outward prosperity, cannot corrupt him: a wise observer has to remark: "No one but a Goethe at the sun of earthly happiness can keep his Phoenix wings unsinged."

This translation has been made from the ten-volume edition of Ludwig Geiger, Berlin, 1889.

The only previous English translation of which I am aware is that by J. Oxenford (1847), revised in 1908 by Miss Annie Steele Smith (Bohn edition), also an anonymous American translation edited by Eric Godwin (1847). Of these I have not hesitated to avail myself, and am entirely indebted to them for the verse translations.

R. O. MOON.

## PREFACE

As preface to the present work, which perhaps more than another requires one, I put here the letter of a friend, which has given rise to such a serious undertaking.

“ We have now, my dear friend, the twelve parts of your poetical works gathered together, and find, as we read them through, much that is known, much that is unknown, indeed, much that has been forgotten has been revived by this collection. We cannot refrain from regarding these twelve volumes, which stand before us in a uniform size, as a whole, and we should like for them to sketch out a picture of the author and his talent. Now it cannot be denied, in view of the vigour with which he began his literary career, and the long time which has elapsed since then, a dozen small volumes hardly seem sufficient. No one can conceal the fact that in regard to some particular works they have for the most part been called forth by special occasions, and that definite outward objects as well as marked stages of inward culture arise from them, and none the less certain temporary moral and artistic maxims and convictions prevail therein. As a whole, however, these productions remain without connection ; indeed, one can often scarcely believe that they originated from the same writer.

“ Your friends, meanwhile, have not given up the search and endeavour, as they become more

deeply acquainted with your life and way of thinking, to divine many a riddle, to solve many a problem ; indeed, because of an old affection, and a connection of many years' standing, even in the difficulties which present themselves, they find a certain charm. Yet assistance here and there would be pleasant, which you can hardly refuse to our friendly sentiments.

“ The first thing, then, that we ask of you is that the recent edition of your poetical works, arranged according to certain internal relations, should be presented by you in a chronological sequence, that the conditions of life and feeling which gave rise to the subject and also the examples which influenced you, and no less the theoretical principles which you followed, should be confided to us in some kind of connection. Devote this labour for the sake of a narrow circle ; perchance something will arise from it which will be pleasing and useful to a larger one. The author, even up to his most advanced age, should not give up the advantage of conversing, even at a distance, with those who are bound to him by affection ; and if it is not granted to every one to come forward anew, in certain years, with unexpected and powerfully effective productions, yet just at that time when knowledge is more complete and consciousness more dear, the task should be very entertaining and enlivening to treat again what has been created as fresh matter and to work it up for a Last Part, which may help again to the culture of those whose culture has hitherto been due to the artist.”

This desire, so kindly expressed, awakened within me immediately the wish to comply with it ; for if in earlier years we passionately follow our own course and, so as not to turn away from it, impatiently refuse the requests of others, so in later years it is highly

to be desired by us, if any sympathy should in a friendly way stir and determine us to a new activity. I therefore undertook at once the preliminary labour of separating the larger and smaller poetical works of my twelve volumes and arranging them according to years. I tried to represent to myself the time and circumstances under which they had been composed. But the task soon became more difficult, as copious notes and explanations became necessary in order to fill up the gaps between those which had already been made public. For, in the first place, everything on which I had first practised myself was lacking ; much that had been begun and not completed was also lacking ; indeed, even of much that was completed the outer form had entirely vanished away, as it had been fully reworked and cast into a different shape. Besides, I had yet to remember how I had toiled in the sciences and other arts, and what I had partly practised in silence and partly made known publicly in such apparently strange departments, both individually and in conjunction with friends.

All this I wished gradually to introduce for the satisfaction of my well-wishers ; but these labours and reflections always led me further on ; for while I was anxious to respond to that very well-considered request, and laboured to represent in their order my inward emotions, outward influences, and the steps which theoretically and practically I had trod, I was carried out of the narrow sphere of my private life into the wide world. The figures of a hundred important men, who had influenced me directly or indirectly, came before me ; indeed, the tremendous commotion of the universal political world, which had had the greatest influence upon me and the whole



mass of my contemporaries, had to be especially considered. For the main task of Biography seems to be this : to exhibit the man in relation to the circumstances of his time and to show how far everything has opposed or favoured his progress, what kind of a view of the world and of mankind he has formed from them, and how he, if an artist, poet, or writer, may outwardly reflect them. But for this is required what is scarcely attainable, namely, that the individual should know himself and his generation : himself, in how far he has remained the same under all circumstances ; his generation as that which carries along with it, determines and forms the willing as well as the unwilling, in such a manner that we may well say that anyone born ten years earlier or later, as regards his own culture and his influence on the outside world, would have been quite a different person.

In this way, from such considerations and efforts, from such recollections and reflections, the present description took its origin ; and from this point of view as to its source can it best be enjoyed, used, and most fairly judged. But with regard to anything that might be said further, particularly in regard to the half-poetical, half-historical manner of treatment, frequent opportunity will, doubtless, occur in the course of the narrative.

## BOOK I

*“ὁ μὴ δαρεῖς ἄνθρωπος οὐ παιδεύεται.”*<sup>1</sup>

I WAS born at Frankfort-on-the-Main on the 28th of August 1749, at midday, on the stroke of twelve. The position of the stars was favourable ; the sun was in the sign of Virgo, and had reached its zenith ; Jupiter and Venus were friendly, Mercury not in opposition ; the Moon alone, just full, exerted her power of reflection all the more as she had entered her planetary hour. She was therefore in opposition to my birth, which could not come about until this hour was past.

These good aspects, which astrologers later on knew how to estimate very highly for me, may well have been the cause of my preservation, for, owing to the unskilfulness of the midwife, I came into the world as though dead, and the fact that I saw the light was only brought about with great trouble. This circumstance, which caused my relations much anxiety, was, however, an advantage to my fellow-citizens, for my grandfather, the chief magistrate, John Wolfgang Textor, took the opportunity from it of having an obstetrician established and of introducing or reviving instruction in midwifery, which may well have been an advantage to posterity.

When we wish to remember what has befallen us in earliest youth, we often find that we confuse that which we have heard from others with an actual personal experience. Without therefore instituting an exact investigation, which could lead to nothing, I am conscious of our having lived in an old house, which consisted of two houses that had been thrown into one.

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<sup>1</sup> “The man who has not been chastised is not educated” (Menander).

A spiral staircase led to disconnected rooms, and the difference of level of the floors was remedied by steps.

For us children, a younger sister and myself, the spacious entrance hall was the part we liked best, near the door of which was a large wooden lattice whereby we came into direct communication with the street and the open air. Such a bird-cage, with which many houses were provided, was called a Frame (*Geräms*). The women sat there to sew and to knit; the cook picked her salad; the neighbours conversed there with one another, and the streets consequently acquired in fine weather a southern appearance. One had a feeling of freedom, while at the same time being on familiar terms with the general public. So by means of these porches we children, too, came into contact with our neighbours, of whom three brothers Von Ochsenstein, the surviving sons of the deceased chief magistrate, living opposite to us, were very fond of me, and played about and diverted themselves with me in all kinds of ways.

My parents liked to tell of many espiègleries to which those otherwise serious and lonely men incited me.

I will only mention one of these jokes. There had just been held a crockery fair, and the kitchen had not only been provided with such goods for the immediate future, but for us children, too, similar crockery had been bought for us to play with. One fine afternoon when all was quiet in the house, I busied myself in the Frame with my dishes and pots, and as I could get no more fun out of them I threw a piece of crockery on to the street and was delighted when it made a loud noise in breaking. The Von Ochsensteins, who saw how pleased I was with it and that I clapped my hands with joy, cried out, "Another." I lost no time in flinging out a pot, and on their continuous cries for more, I threw all the dishes, saucepans, and cans one after another on to the pavement.

My neighbours continued to signify their applause, and I was extremely glad to give them pleasure. But my supply was finished, and they kept calling out, "More." I hurried at once into the kitchen and brought the earthenware plates which now in breaking made a still more amusing noise; and so I ran to and fro, brought one plate after another as I was able to reach them from where they stood in rows on the dresser, and since the others could not be satisfied, I

hurled into like destruction all the crockery I could lay hands on. It was not till later that some one appeared to stop and prevent me. The mischief was done, and for all this broken crockery one had at least an amusing story, in which the roguish originators of it found great delight till their dying day.

My father's mother, whose house it really was in which we dwelt, occupied a large room out at the back of the house immediately on the ground floor, and we were accustomed to bring our games right up to her chair—yes, even when she was ill, up to her bedside. I remember her, if I may say so, as a spirit—a beautiful, thin lady, always neatly dressed in white. Gentle, friendly, and benign, she has ever remained in my memory.

The street in which our house was situated we had heard called the "Stag Ditch," but as we saw neither ditches nor stags, we wanted to have the expression explained to us. We were told that our house stood on a spot which was formerly outside the town, and there, where the street now was, had formerly been a ditch in which a number of stags had been left. These animals had been preserved and fed here because, according to an ancient custom, the Senate every year had publicly dined off a stag, which was accordingly left here in the ditch close at hand for such a day of festival, even if princes or knights interfered with the city's sporting rights, or it might be enemies kept the town encompassed or besieged. This pleased us very much, and we wished there had been in our time also such a park of tame deer for us to see.

The back part of the house, especially from the upper floor, had a most pleasant view over an almost unlimited extent of neighbouring gardens, which stretched nearly up to the walls of the town. Unfortunately, in changing what were public grounds into private gardens, our house and a few others which lay at the corner of the street were very much shortened, since the houses towards the horse-market had appropriated to themselves large outhouses and big gardens, while we saw ourselves shut off from these neat-looking gardens by the tolerably high wall of our court.

On the second floor there was a room which was called the garden room, because by means of a few plants one had endeavoured to supply the want of a garden. As I grew up,

that was my favourite retreat, which filled me not indeed with sadness but with ardent longing. Beyond these gardens, over the walls and ramparts of the city one looked upon a beautiful and fruitful plain—the same which stretches towards Höchst. There in summer-time as a rule I learnt my lessons, waited till the thunderstorms were over, and could never satisfy myself with seeing the sun go down directly opposite our window. But, at the same time, when I saw the neighbours wandering through their gardens, looking after their flowers, the children playing, parties of friends enjoying themselves, and I could hear bowls rolling and skittles falling, there was early awakened in me a feeling of solitude, and resulting from it a vague yearning, which corresponded with the seriousness and foreboding natural to my temperament, showed its influence at an early age and more distinctly in future years.

The old and gloomy character of the house with its many corners was calculated to excite fear and dread in the mind of a child. Unfortunately, the educational maxim still prevailed of removing early from children all fear for the awful and invisible, and accustoming them to what is terrible.

On that account we children had to sleep alone, and when this was impossible for us and we quietly got out of bed and sought the society of the domestic servants, our father with his dressing-gown turned inside out, and for us on that account sufficiently disguised, stood in the way and frightened us back to our bedrooms. Every one can understand the evil effect of this. How is he to rid himself of fear who is encompassed by two sources of alarm? My mother, who was always cheerful and full of joy, and desirous that others should be so too, found a better educational expedient. She knew how to arrive at her object by means of rewards. It was the time of peaches, and she promised us the rich enjoyment of them every morning if we had conquered our nightly fears. This plan was successful, and both parties were satisfied.

Inside the house my eyes were most attracted by a number of Roman views with which my father had adorned an anteroom. They were engravings by some skilled predecessor of Piranesi,<sup>1</sup> who understood architecture and per-

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<sup>1</sup> A copperplate engraver, famous for his "Le Antichità Romane," 1707-78.

spective well and whose engraving needle was very clear and much valued. Here I saw every day the Piazza del Popolo, the Colosseum, the Piazza of St Peter's and St Peter's Church inside and out, the castle of St Angelo, and many other places. These pictures made a deep impression on me, and my father, otherwise very laconic, was kind enough often to give us a description of the subjects. My father's predilection for the Italian language and for everything connected with that country was very pronounced. He often showed to us a small collection of marbles and natural curiosities which he had brought from thence, and a great deal of his time he expended on his diary, written in Italian, the copying out and the revision of which he completed with his own hand in parts slowly and with accuracy. A cheerful old Italian teacher, named Giovanizzi, was helpful to him in this. The old man did not sing badly, and my mother had to adapt herself to accompany him and herself daily on the clavichord, so that I soon got to know and learned by heart "*Solitario bosco ombroso*"<sup>1</sup> before I understood it. My father was naturally fond of teaching, and since he had retired from business, he liked to impart to others his knowledge and accomplishments. Accordingly, during the first years of their married life he had kept my mother busily occupied with writing as well as playing the clavichord and singing; she therefore saw herself obliged to acquire some knowledge and skill in the Italian language, just enough for urgent necessity.

We usually liked to pass all our leisure time with our grandmother, in whose large room we found adequate space for our games. She knew how to occupy us with all kinds of little things and to refresh us with all sorts of nice morsels. One Christmas evening, however, she crowned all her good deeds by bringing before us a puppet-show, and so a new world was created in the old home. This unexpected sight had a powerful attraction for our young minds; especially it made a very strong impression on the boy, which continued to vibrate with a great and lasting effect.

The small stage with its mute array of characters, which at first had only been shown to us, but was afterwards handed over for us to set in motion and call into dramatic

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<sup>1</sup> *Metastasio*.

life, was for us children of all the greater value, as it was the last legacy of our good grandmother, who soon afterwards, owing to increasing illness, was first withdrawn from our sight and then for ever removed by death. Her departure was all the more important for the family, as there ensued from it a complete alteration in our circumstances.

While our grandmother lived, my father had abstained from making even the very slightest change or renovation in the house, but we knew full well that he was preparing himself for an extensive scheme of building which was now at once taken in hand.

In Frankfort, as in many other old towns, when erecting wooden structures one had been allowed for the sake of space to give a projection not only to the first but also to the remaining floors, and so streets which were especially narrow acquired a somewhat gloomy and oppressive appearance. At last a new law was passed that whoever was building a new house should confine his projections to the first upper storey only, but the remainder had to be in the perpendicular. So as not to give up the projecting room on the second storey, my father, who was little troubled by outward architectural appearance and only concerned to have sound and comfortable arrangements inside, made use, as many before him had done, of the expedient of propping up the upper parts of the house and removing from below upwards one part after another and putting in, as it were, the new, so that when at last scarcely anything of the old remained, the whole new building could be regarded as only a reparation. Since now the demolition and building up took place gradually, my father determined not to leave the house, so as to be able to carry out his intentions better and give directions, for he was well acquainted with the technical side of building ; at the same time, he did not want to let his family go from him. This new epoch was for the children very astonishing and strange. To see the rooms in which they had been so often confined and plagued with wearisome learning and tasks, the passages along which they had played, the walls for the cleanliness and upkeep of which so much care had been devoted, falling beneath the pickaxe of the mason and the hammer of the carpenter—and, moreover, from below upwards ; to swing, as it were, in the air on the supporting planks and yet ever to be constrained to a certain

lesson or to some definite piece of work—all this brought confusion into our young heads which could not easily find their equipoise again. And yet the inconvenience was felt less by the young people, because they gained somewhat more room for playing in than hitherto, and frequent opportunities of swinging on beams and see-sawing on the boards. My father during the first part of the time carried through his plan with persistence, yet when at last the roof had to be removed and, in spite of the outstretched oilcloth of the wall-hangings which had been taken down, the rain came on to our beds, he decided, though reluctantly, to hand over the children to kind friends who had already before offered to take them, and to send them for a time to a school in the town.

This transition involved much that was unpleasant, for, while the children who had hitherto been brought up separately at home, purely, honourably, though strictly, were thrust into a rough crowd of young creatures, they had unexpectedly to endure everything from those who were vulgar, bad, indeed even base, because they were without any weapons or capacity for defending themselves.

It was about this time that I became properly acquainted with my native city, as by degrees with more and more freedom I wandered up and down, sometimes alone, sometimes with lively companions. In order to communicate in some degree the impression which these serious and worthy surroundings made upon me, I must begin with the description of my birthplace as it unfolded itself in its different parts gradually before me.

Above all I loved to walk about on the great bridge over the Main. Its length, strength, and fine appearance made it a remarkable structure; it was also from earlier times almost the only memorial of that forethought due from the civil authority to the citizens. Upstream and downstream, the beautiful river attracted my gaze to it, and when on the crown of the bridge the golden cock glittered in the sunshine, I always experienced a feeling of joy. Usually I then walked through Sachsenhausen, and was ferried with great satisfaction across the river for a kreutzer.<sup>1</sup> On this side of the stream again, I crept

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<sup>1</sup> Worth about one-third of a penny.



along to the wine-market, and marvelled at the mechanism of the cranes when the goods were unloaded ; but what specially entertained me was the arrival of the trading vessels, where one saw among them so many and such curious specimens of humanity disembark. On entering the town again the Saalhof, which at least stood on the place where the Castle of the Emperor Charlemagne and his successors was said to have been, was greeted with profound reverence every time. One liked to lose oneself in the old industrial town, and especially on market days, in the crowd which gathered together round the Church of St Bartholomew. Here from the earliest times the multitude of sellers and dealers had crowded against one another, and consequently, the place being thus occupied, it was not easy in later times to bring about a more spacious and cheerful arrangement. The booths of the so-called *Pfarreisen* were very important places for us children, and we brought many a Batzen <sup>1</sup> to them in order to get coloured sheets of paper stamped with golden animals. It was only occasionally that we made our way through the narrow, crowded, and dirty market-place. I remember also that I always fled with horror from the adjoining narrow and disgusting slaughterhouses. The Römerberg, on the other hand, was a much pleasanter place for walking. The way to the new town along by the new shops was always cheerful and delightful ; we only regretted that there was no street leading directly to the Frauenkirche, and we always had to make a long détour through the Hasengasse or the Catherine Gate. But what attracted most the attention of the child were the many small towers within the town, the fortresses within the fortress, the monastic enclosure which was walled all round, and the still more or less castle-like places dating from earlier centuries, such as the Nuremberg Court, the Compostella, the Braunfels, the ancestral house of the family of Stallburg, and several strongholds in later days used for industrial purposes.

At that time there was nothing of grandeur in the way of architecture to be seen in Frankfort ; everything pointed to a period long past and tumultuous for town and district. Gates and towers which defined the boundaries of the old

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<sup>1</sup> The fifteenth part of a Gulden.

city, then again, farther on, gates, towers, walls, bridges, ramparts, with which the new city was enclosed—everything spoke only too clearly of the necessity of procuring safety for the community in tumultuous times, which had led to these constructions, so that the squares, the streets—even the new ones and those laid out on a broader and finer plan—all owed their origin to chance and caprice, and not to any regulating mind. Thus was a certain liking for the antique implanted in the boy, which was specially nurtured and favoured by old chronicles and woodcuts, as, for instance, those of Grave relating to the siege of Frankfort ;<sup>1</sup> and so another taste was developed in him—namely, that of simply grasping human circumstances in their manifold and natural character without making any further demand on interest or beauty. Therefore it was one of our favourite walks, which we tried to take about twice in the course of a year, to go round the circuit of the city walls. Gardens, courts, and back-buildings extended up to the Zwinger, and one could see many thousand people in their little domestic, isolated, and secluded activities. From the elaborately laid-out show gardens of the rich to the orchards of the citizen anxious about his necessities, from thence to the factories, bleaching-grounds, and similar establishments, even to the cemetery itself, for a small world lay within the circuit of the city, one passed a most varied and wonderful spectacle which changed at every step, and with the enjoyment of it our childish curiosity could never be sufficiently satisfied. For, indeed, the well-known lame devil,<sup>2</sup> when he lifted off the roofs of Madrid for his friend, scarcely did more for him than was done for us in the open air by bright sunshine. The keys which one had to make use of in the journey in order to pass through all kinds of towers, staircases, and gates were in the hands of the masters of ordnance, and we never failed to flatter their subordinates as much as we could.

But an object of unfailing interest and, in a different sense, a more helpful place for us was the Town Hall, called the "Römer." In its low vaulted halls we were only too delighted to lose ourselves. We managed to obtain

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<sup>1</sup> By Maurice of Saxony in 1552.

<sup>2</sup> Allusion to the novel of Le Sage, "Le Diable Boiteux."

an entrance into the large, very simple Council room. Panelled up to a certain level, the walls as well as the vaulted ceiling were white, and the whole without a trace of painting or sculpture. Only on the middle wall up above one read the short inscription :

“ The speech of one man  
Is the speech of no man.  
Justice needs they both be heard.”

According to the most ancient custom, benches were ranged around the wainscot and raised about one step above the ground for the members of this assembly. There we easily understood why the order of precedence of our Senate was distributed according to benches. From the left-hand side of the floor up to the opposite corner of the front bench sat the Aldermen ; in the corner itself, the chief magistrate, the only one who had a small table in front of him ; on his left, up to the side where the windows were, sat the gentlemen of the second bench ; while along the windows ran the third bench, which comprised the craftsmen ; in the middle of the room stood a table for the Registrar.

Once within the Römer we even joined in the crowd at the audiences of the burgomasters. But everything relating to the election and coronation of the Emperor had a greater attraction for us. We knew how to obtain the favour of the custodian, so that we were allowed to climb up the new gay imperial staircase, painted in fresco, which on other occasions was shut off by a railing. The election chamber, adorned with purple wall-hangings and quaintly carved gilt cornices, inspired me with awe. The paintings over the door, on which were represented small children or genii clad in imperial robes and laden with the imperial insignia cut an odd figure, were contemplated by us with great attention, and we even hoped to see a coronation with our own eyes. They had very much difficulty in getting us away from the great imperial room when we had once been fortunate enough to slip inside, and we looked upon him as our truest friend who felt inclined to tell us something of the deeds of all the emperors who were painted round at a certain height in half-length portraits.

Of Charlemagne we had heard many a legend, but that which was historically interesting for us began first

with Rudolph of Hapsburg, who by his courage had put an end to such great disorders. Charles IV. also attracted our attention. We had already heard of the Golden Bull and the statutes for the administration of criminal justice,<sup>1</sup> and that he had not made the Frankforters suffer for their adhesion to his noble rival, Emperor Günther of Schwarzburg. We heard Maximilian praised as a friend to mankind and his townsmen, and we were told that it was prophesied of him that he would be the last Emperor from a German house, which accordingly came to pass, because after his death the choice wavered between the King of Spain, afterwards Charles V., and the King of France, Francis I. It was added with some concern that such a prediction, or rather foreboding, was in circulation; for it was obvious that there was still only room for one emperor left—a circumstance which, though it appeared to be a matter of chance, filled the patriotically minded with anxiety.

When we went our rounds we did not fail to betake ourselves to the cathedral and to visit the grave of that brave Günther who was valued by friend and foe. The wonderful stone which formerly covered it is set up in the choir. The door quite close by, leading into the Election Hall, remained shut to us for a long time, until by means of the higher officials we managed to obtain admission into this celebrated place. But we should have done better if, as before, we had continued to picture it in our imagination, for we found the room which was so remarkable in German history, where the most powerful princes were accustomed to assemble for a transaction of such importance, in no way becomingly decorated, but moreover disfigured with beams, poles, scaffolding, and such lumber as people had wanted to put aside. All the more were our imaginations stirred and our hearts uplifted when we shortly afterwards received permission to be present when the Golden Bull was to be shown to some distinguished strangers.

With great curiosity the boy then took in what his parents as well as older relations and acquaintances willingly related and repeated—namely, the histories of the two coronations which had followed shortly after one another, for there was no Frankforter of a certain age who did not

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<sup>1</sup> Charles V., 1555.

regard these two events and their attendant circumstances as the greatest glory of his life. Splendid as had been the coronation of Charles VII., at which in particular the French Ambassador<sup>1</sup> had given magnificent banquets at great cost and with much taste, yet the consequence was all the more melancholy for the good Emperor, who could not maintain his palace at Munich and was compelled in some measure to implore the hospitality of his imperial cities.

Though the coronation of Francis I. was not so strikingly magnificent as the former one, yet it was ennobled by the presence of Maria Theresa, whose beauty seems to have made as great an impression on the men as the grave, dignified bearing and blue eyes of Charles VII. on the women. At all events, both sexes vied with each other in giving to the boy, as he listened, a highly favourable impression of both personages.

All these descriptions and narratives were given in a cheerful and quiet state of mind, for the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle<sup>2</sup> had for the moment put an end to all feuds, and so people spoke in comfort of their former festivities as well as of past campaigns—such as the battle of Dettingen<sup>3</sup> and other remarkable events of bygone years ; and all that was important and fraught with danger seemed, as generally happens when peace has been concluded, only to have occurred in order to serve prosperous people who are free from care with a subject for conversation.

When I had scarcely spent six months in such narrow patriotism the fairs began again, which always introduced an incredible ferment in the heads of children. The springing into existence in a short time of a new town within the city by the construction of so many booths, the bustle, the unloading and unpacking of wares, awakened from the first moments of consciousness an irrepressibly active curiosity and a boundless longing for childish possessions, which the boy with advancing years sought to satisfy now in this way, now in that, as the means of his small purse would allow. But, at the same time, he obtained an idea of all that the

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<sup>1</sup> The Maréchal de Belleisle.

<sup>2</sup> 1747 : it lasted till 1756.

<sup>3</sup> 1743. Charles VII., supported by the French, was defeated by the allied English and Austrians.

world produces, what it requires, and what the inhabitants of the different parts exchange with each other.

These great epochs which came round in spring and autumn were announced by strange solemnities, which appeared all the more worthy as they represented to us in a vivid manner the old time and what had come down from it to ourselves. On Escort Day <sup>1</sup> all the people were afoot, thronging to the Fahrgasse, to the bridge right away beyond Sachsenhausen; all the windows were taken, without anything special happening on that day; the multitude only seemed to be there in order to hustle against one another, and the spectators merely to look at one another, for that which was the real business took place at nightfall, and was rather taken upon trust than actually seen with the eyes.

In those far-off disturbed times when every one did wrong as he liked, or advanced that which is right according to his own good pleasure, the traders coming to the fairs were wilfully plagued and pestered by waylayers both of noble and ignoble birth, so that princes and others of high rank had their dependents escorted into Frankfort by armed men. But the citizens of the imperial city did not want to give up anything belonging to themselves or their district; they went out against the advancing party; hence arose many disputes as to how far the escort might come, or whether it should have the right of entrance into the city at all. Now, as this occurred not only in regard to matters of trade and fairs, but also when persons of rank betook themselves there in times of peace or war, and especially on election days, and it pretty often came to blows when any retinue which they could not endure in the city desired to press in along with its lord, many negotiations took place and many agreements were made in later times, though always with reservations of rights on either side. Hope had not been abandoned of composing once and for all a quarrel which had lasted for centuries, inasmuch as the whole institution, for which it had been so long and violently carried on, could be regarded as almost useless, or at least as superfluous.

Meanwhile, on those days, the civic cavalry in many divisions, with their chiefs at their head, rode forth from

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<sup>1</sup> Four days before the official commencement of the fair.

different gates and found on a definite spot some troopers or hussars of those persons who were entitled to an escort, who, together with their leaders, were well received and entertained. They stayed till towards evening and then rode into the city, scarcely seen by the multitude, for many a civic knight could neither manage his horse nor keep his saddle. The most important processions came to the bridge-gate, and the pressure was therefore strongest there. Last of all, at nightfall came the mail-coach from Nuremberg with a similar escort, and the common saying was that an old woman, in pursuance of custom, must always be sitting therein. Whereupon the boys in the street were wont to break out into a shrill cry, though the passengers who were sitting in the coach could no longer be distinguished. The throng that pressed after the coach through the bridge-gate was incredible and bewildering to the senses. The houses, therefore, nearest to the bridge were those mostly in demand among the spectators.

Another still more strange ceremony which excited the public in broad daylight was the "Pipers' Court." This ceremony commemorated those early times in which important industrial towns endeavoured, if not to free themselves from tolls, at least to obtain a moderation of them as they increased in proportion with trade and industry. The Emperor who had need of them granted so much liberty in cases where it depended on him, but usually only for a year, and it had therefore to be renewed annually. This was effected by means of symbolical gifts, which before the opening of St Bartholomew's Fair were brought to the imperial magistrate, who might, when occasion served, be the chief toll-collector, and for the sake of decorum the gifts were offered when he was sitting in full court with the sheriffs. When afterwards the chief magistrate was no longer appointed by the Emperor, but chosen by the city itself, he still retained these prerogatives; and then both the immunities of the cities from toll, as well as the ceremonies by which the representatives from Worms, Nuremberg, and Old Bamberg recognised this ancient favour, had come down to our times. The day before the Nativity of Our Lady<sup>1</sup> an open Court was proclaimed. In the great Imperial Hall,

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<sup>1</sup> 7th September.

in a railed-in space, sat the sheriffs in a raised position, and one step higher sat the chief magistrate in their midst, while the procurators of both parties invested with plenipotentiary powers sat below on the right hand. The Registrar begins to read aloud the weighty judgments reserved for this day ; the procurators ask for copies, make appeals, or do whatever else seems necessary. All at once a wonderful music announces, as it were, the advent of former centuries. Then three pipers, one of whom blows a shawm, the other a bassoon, the third a pommer or hautboy. They wear mantles fringed with gold, their notes fastened on the sleeves, and they have the head covered. They left their hotel punctually at ten o'clock, the deputies and their escort following ; stared at by all, residents and strangers, they enter the hall. The proceedings of the Court are stopped, pipers and their escort halt before the barriers, the deputy steps in and stations himself opposite the chief magistrate. The symbolical gifts which were demanded in accordance with ancient custom consisted usually of such goods as the contributing city was wont to deal in. Pepper passed, as it were, for everything else, and so even on this occasion the deputy brought a very beautifully turned goblet filled with pepper. Over it lay a pair of gloves, curiously embroidered, stitched, and tasselled with silk—a token of a favour granted and accepted—which even the Emperor himself made use of in certain cases. Near by one saw a white staff which in former times could not easily be dispensed with at legal and judicial proceedings. There were also added some small silver coins ; and the city of Worms brought an old felt hat, which it always redeemed again, so that the same one had been a witness of these ceremonies for many years.

After the deputy had made his speech, handed over his present, and received from the chief magistrate assurance of continued favour, he withdrew from the closed circle, the pipers sounded, the procession went away as it had come, the Court went on with its business until the second and at last the third deputy had been introduced ; for they came at first one after another, partly so that the pleasure of the public should last longer and partly because they were always the same old-fashioned performers, whom Nuremberg for itself and its sister cities had undertaken to maintain and produce every year at the appointed place.



We children were particularly interested by this festival, because we were not a little flattered at seeing our grandfather occupy such an honourable position, and because on the very same day we were accustomed quite modestly to pay him a visit, in order that, when my grandmother had shaken the pepper into her spice box, we might get hold of a cup, a small rod, a pair of gloves, an old Räder-Albus.<sup>1</sup> It was impossible to have these ceremonies, with their power of conjuring up the past, explained to us without leading us back into former centuries and informing us of the habits, customs, and feelings of our ancestors, who in a strange way were made present to us by pipers and delegates, apparently risen from the dead, and even by tangible gifts which we might ourselves possess.

These time-honoured solemnities were followed by a much more delightful festival for us children in the fresh air, outside the city. On the right bank of the Main going downstream, some half-hour's walk from the gate, there rises a sulphurous spring neatly enclosed and surrounded by ancient lime trees. Not far from it stands the Good-People's-Court, formerly a hospital, erected on account of the waters. On the commons round about on a certain day of the year the cattle from the neighbourhood were assembled, and the herdsmen, together with their sweethearts, celebrated a rural festival, with dance and song and all kinds of pleasure and unrestrained conduct. On the other side of the city there was a similar but larger common, alike adorned by a spring and still finer lime trees. Thither at Whitsuntide the flocks of sheep were driven, and at the same time the poor, pale orphan children were allowed to come out of their retreats into the open air; for it was not till later that one came upon the idea that such destitute creatures, who are obliged to make their way in the world, should sooner or later be brought in contact with it, and that, instead of being confined in a dreary fashion, they should rather soon be accustomed to service and endurance, and that there was every reason for strengthening them from earliest childhood as well physically as morally. The nurses and servants, who were always ready for a walk, did not fail to carry or conduct us to such places in our earliest years, so these

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<sup>1</sup> An old silver coin, one-thirtieth part of a Gulden.

rural festivals belong amongst others to the first impressions which I can remember.

Meanwhile our house had been finished, and indeed in a fairly short time, because everything had been well considered, prepared, and arranged for the necessary sum of money. We were now all together again, and felt ourselves at ease, for a well-laid plan, when once it is carried out, makes us forget all the unpleasantnesses which were necessary for its accomplishment. As a private dwelling the house was roomy enough, light and cheerful throughout, the staircase open, agreeable front rooms, and a view over the gardens which could be enjoyed from several of the windows. The completion of the interior and what belonged to its decoration was accomplished by degrees, and provided at the same time for occupation and amusement. The first thing to be brought into order was my father's collection of books, of which the best, bound in calf or half-calf, adorned the walls of his office and study. He possessed the beautiful Dutch editions of the Latin classics, which he tried to procure all in quarto for the sake of uniformity, then many other works which related to Roman antiquities and the less technical parts of jurisprudence. The most renowned Italian poets were not lacking, and for Tasso he showed a great liking. He also had the best and newest stories of Travel, and found much pleasure in correcting and amplifying Keyssler and Nemeiz from them. He had also surrounded himself with all needful assistance to learning, such as dictionaries of various languages and encyclopædias, so that one could obtain advice to one's heart's content, as well as many other things which served for use and amusement. The other half of the collection, in neat parchment bindings, with the titles very beautifully written, was installed in a special attic. The subsequent acquisition of new books as well as the binding and arrangement of them, he carried on with great composure and system; at the same time, the learned critical reviews which attributed special merits to this or that work exercised great influence over him. His collection of juridical treatises was increased every year by several volumes.

Next the pictures, which in the old house had been scattered about, were collected together and symmetrically hung on the walls of a cheerful room near the study, all in

black frames adorned with gilt straight mouldings. My father had the principle, which he often and even passionately expressed, that one should give occupation to the living masters and pay less attention to the departed, in the estimation of whom much prejudice slipped in unawares. He had the idea that with pictures it was the same as with Rhenish wines, which, though age might impart a special value to them, could be produced in each following year just as good as in the past. After the lapse of some time the new wine would also become old, just as valuable, and perhaps even more delicious. He confirmed himself in this opinion by remarking that many old pictures seemed to gain for amateurs a great worth because they became darker and browner, and the harmonious tone of such pictures was frequently praised. My father assured us, on the contrary, that he had no misgiving lest the new pictures should not also turn black in time, but that they would gain thereby he would not admit.

Acting on these principles, he kept all the Frankfort artists occupied for many years : the painter Hirth, who well understood how to animate oak and beech woods and other rural scenes with cattle ; likewise Trautmann, who had taken Rembrandt as his model and excelled so greatly in illuminated interiors and reflections as well as in effective conflagrations that he was once invited to paint a companion-piece to a picture by Rembrandt ; also Schütz, who in the manner of Sachtlebens, diligently worked at the Rhine neighbourhood ; and Junker, who executed with great purity flower and fruit pieces, still life, and figures quietly occupied, after the model of the Flemish and Dutch schools. But now, by means of this new arrangement, by a more comfortable room, and still more by the acquaintance of a clever artist, our love of Art was again aroused and enlivened. This artist was Seekatz, a pupil of Brinckmann, the Court painter at Darmstadt, whose character and talent will be more fully seen in the sequel.

In this way we proceeded with the completion of the remaining rooms according to their several purposes. Cleanliness and order were the prevailing features throughout. Especially did large panes of plate-glass contribute to a good light, which had been lacking in the old house for many reasons, but mainly on account of the window-

panes, which were round for the most part. My father seemed cheerful because everything had gone well with his undertaking : if it was not that his good humour had sometimes been interrupted because the diligence and accuracy of the labourers did not always come up to his demands, a happier life than ours could not be conceived, especially as much good partly arose in the family itself and partly flowed into it from without.

But the boy's peace of mind was shaken to its innermost for the first time by an event of world-wide importance. On 1st November 1755 there occurred the earthquake at Lisbon, which spread an appalling terror over a world by this time grown accustomed to peace and quiet. A great and magnificent capital, which was at the same time a trading city and harbour, was without any warning overtaken by a most dreadful calamity. The earth totters and sways, the sea rushes up, ships are dashed together, houses collapse, churches and towers come tumbling down, the royal palace is partly swallowed up by the sea, the bursting land seems to vomit forth flames, since smoke and fire appear everywhere in the ruins. Sixty thousand people, a moment before in ease and comfort, fall together, and amongst them he was lucky who was at once rendered incapable of any feeling or thought about the disaster. The flames continue raging, and with them a crowd of criminals, before incarcerated, but set free from prison by the event. The unfortunate survivors are exposed to robbery, murder, and all sorts of outrage : thus on all sides Nature asserts her boundless caprice.

Quicker than the authentic news, intimations of this event spread over wide regions ; in many places slighter tremblings were noticed : many springs, especially those with health-giving properties, ceased to flow ; and so all the greater was the effect of the news itself, which was circulated at first in general terms, then rapidly, with horrible details. Hence among the God-fearing there was no lack of reflections, among the philosophers no lack of ground for consolation, and among the clergy no lack of warnings. So complicated an event arrested the attention of the world for a long time ; and, as more circumstantial news came to hand of the widespread effect of the explosion from every quarter, the minds already excited by the misfortunes of strangers became

more and more anxious for their friends and belongings. Perhaps the demon of fear had never so quickly and powerfully diffused his terror over the earth.

The boy, who was bound to hear all this frequently discussed, was not a little staggered. God, the Creator and Upholder of Heaven and Earth, whom the explanation of the first article of the Creed declared to be so wise and merciful, in so far as He had abandoned the just and the unjust to a like destruction, had in no way shown Himself to be fatherly. In vain did my young mind seek to fortify itself against such impressions. This was all the less possible as the wise and men learned in the Scriptures could not agree as to the way in which such a phenomenon should be regarded.

The following summer offered a closer opportunity of getting to know directly the wrathful God, of whom the Old Testament has handed down so much. Suddenly a hail-storm, accompanied by thunder and lightning, violently broke and drove together the new window-panes on the west side of the house, damaged the new furniture, destroyed some costly books and other valuable things, and was for us children all the more alarming, as the domestic servants, quite beside themselves, hustled us into a dark passage, and there, falling on their knees, with terrible screams and cries, thought to reconcile the enraged Deity. Meanwhile my father, who alone was quite composed, tore open and lifted the window-frames off their hinges, whereby he saved many panes of glass, but laid the way still more open for the torrents of rain which followed the hailstorm, so that after we were finally quieted down, we found ourselves in rooms and staircases flooded with running water.

Such events, disturbing as they might be on the whole, interrupted but little the course of instruction which my father himself had once for all undertaken to give us children. His youth had been spent at the Coburg gymnasium, one of the best German teaching institutions. He had there laid a sound foundation in languages and in all else that is reckoned a good education. Afterwards in Leipsic he had occupied himself with jurisprudence and finally taken his degree at Giessen. His thesis, composed with an earnest diligence, "*Electa de additione Hereditatis*," is still quoted with approval by teachers of the Law.

It is a laudable wish of all fathers to see realised in their sons what they themselves have failed to attain, almost as if they lived for a second time and wished to use aright the experiences of their first career. Conscious of his own acquirements, confident of his unfailing perseverance, and distrusting all the teachers of that time, my father himself undertook to give instruction to his children, supplemented only so far as seemed necessary with lessons from professional teachers. A pedagogic diletantism was already beginning to show itself everywhere. The pedantry and gloominess of the teachers appointed in the Government schools may well have first given rise to this evil. One sought for something better, but forgot how defective all teaching must be which is not given by trained teachers.

My father's own career had gone more or less as he had wished. I was to go the same way, only further and more comfortably. He valued my natural endowments all the more because they were lacking to him, as he had acquired everything by incalculable diligence, persistent application, and repetition. He often assured me, in season and out of season, in jest and in earnest, that with my talents he would have behaved himself quite differently and not have made such a frivolous use of them.

By quick apprehension, full working out, and accurate retention I soon outgrew the instruction which my father and the other teachers were able to give me, without becoming thoroughly grounded in anything. I disliked grammar, because in it I saw only an arbitrary law ; the rules seemed to me absurd because they were invalidated by so many exceptions, all of which I had to learn again by themselves, and had it not been for the rhyming Latin primer, I should have got on very badly ; however, this I hummed and sang to myself readily enough. We had, too, a geography book with such *memoria technica*, in which the most tasteless rhymes but served to fix the attention on what was to be remembered, *e.g.*:

Upper Yssel has many a fen,  
Which makes it hateful to all men.

The forms and idiomatic modes of expression I easily grasped, and I also quickly unravelled the conception of a thing. In rhetoric, composition, and such matters no one was

my superior, though on account of mistakes in grammar, I often had to stand down. Yet it was such essays that gave my father special pleasure, and for them he rewarded me with a present of money, which for a boy was considerable.

My father taught my sister Italian in the same room in which I had to learn Cellarius by heart. When I had finished my task and had to sit still, I listened with my book before me and grasped Italian very readily, which appeared to me as an agreeable variation of Latin.

Other precocities with regard to memory and composition I had in common with those children who have acquired thereby an early reputation. My father, therefore, could hardly wait till it was time for me to go to the University. He very soon declared that I should likewise study Law in Leipsic, for which he had a strong predilection, and that then I should attend another university and take my degree. With regard to the second, he was indifferent which I should choose, but for some reason or other he had a disinclination to Göttingen, which I regretted, as it was just there that I had placed much confidence and hope.

He told me further that I ought to go to Wetzlar and Regensburg and not less to Vienna, and after that to Italy, though he frequently asserted that Paris should first be seen, for on coming away from Italy one would find nothing else pleasing. These tales of the future course of my youth I willingly heard repeated, especially as they ended in an account of Italy and finally in a description of Naples. My father's otherwise dry and serious manner seemed on these occasions to relax and become enlivened, and then there was produced in us children the passionate desire to become also partakers of this paradise.

Private lessons, which now gradually increased, I shared with the children of the neighbours. This learning in common did not advance me; the teachers went their humdrum way, and the misbehaviour and sometimes the ill-nature of my companions brought disquiet, vexation, and disturbance into our scanty hours of study. Anthologies by which teaching is made cheerful and varied had not yet reached us. Cornelius Nepos was dull for us children, the New Testament was too easy, and by sermons and religious instruction rendered almost commonplace; Cellarius and Pasor could not give us any interest; on the other hand,

a certain rage for rhyming and versification by the reading of the German poets of that time took possession of us. It had seized upon me quite early, as I found it amusing to pass from a rhetorical to a poetical treatment of subjects.

We boys held a Sunday meeting, where every one had to show up verses made by himself; and here I met with something strange, which for a long time unsettled me. My poems, whatever they might be, I could not help regarding as the best. But I soon noticed that my competitors, who produced very poor stuff, were in the same condition and thought no less of themselves; indeed, which seemed to me more disquieting, an excellent fellow, though quite unskilled at such kind of work, to whom in other respects I was favourably disposed, but who had his rhymes made by the private tutor, considered them not only to be the best, but was firmly convinced that he had made them himself, as he in our confidential intercourse always sincerely asserted. When I saw such folly and error before my eyes, the question weighed upon my mind one day whether, perhaps, I was not in the same position, whether these poems were not really better than mine, and whether I did not seem just as cracked to those boys as they did to me. This disturbed me very much and for a long time, for it was quite impossible for me to find an external criticism of the truth; indeed, I even stopped my productions, until I was quieted by my own light temperament and conceit and finally by a trial of skill which our teachers and parents, who had noticed our games, started on the spur of the moment. I acquitted myself well in this, and carried off general applause.

At that time no libraries for children had been started. Old people had themselves still childish feelings, and found it convenient to communicate their own culture to their successors. Apart from the "Orbis Pictus" of Amos Comenius, no book of this kind came within our reach; but the large folio Bible, with engravings by Merian, was often conned by us leaf by leaf. Gottfried's chronicles, with the engravings of the same master, informed us about the most notable events of the world's history; the "Acerra Philologica" contributed further all kinds of fables, mythologies, and wonders, and as I soon became familiar with Ovid's "Metamorphoses," and in particular diligently studied the first books, my young brain was quietly filled with a



mass of pictures and occurrences, of important and wonderful figures and events, so that I never got bored as I was always busy working up, repeating, and again reproducing these acquisitions.

The "Telemachus" of Fénelon, which I first knew only in Neukirch's translation, had a more salutary and moral effect upon me than these occasionally crude and mostly dangerous stories of the ancients, and, although it was so imperfectly executed, it gave rise to a sweet and beneficent influence upon my mind. That "Robinson Crusoe" was added in due time was in the nature of things, and it may be well understood that the "Island of Felsenburg" was not missing. Lord Anson's "Journey Round the World" combined the dignity of truth with the rich fancies of legend, and while we accompanied the admirable sailor with our thoughts we were carried into all parts of the world, and endeavoured to follow him with our fingers on the globe. Now a still richer harvest came before me, when I lighted upon a mass of writings which, though they certainly in their present form could not be called excellent, yet their contents, however, in an innocent fashion bring nearer to us many a meritorious action of former times.

The publication or rather the fabrication of those books, which at a later date have become well known and even famous under the title of "Volkschriften, Volksbücher" (People's Books), was carried on in Frankfort itself. On account of their great sale they were printed almost illegibly on most horrible blotting-paper from stereotypes. We children had the good fortune to find daily these valuable remains of the Middle Ages on a small table before the front door of a second-hand bookseller, and to possess them ourselves for a couple of kreutzer. The Jester, the Four Children of Haimon, the Fair Melusina, the Emperor Octavian, the Beautiful Magelone, Fortunatus, with the whole family of them down to the Wandering Jew—all were at our service as long as it pleased us to seize upon these works instead of some eating by stealth. The greatest advantage was that if we had read through or otherwise damaged such a sheet, it could soon be procured again and devoured afresh.

Just as a family expedition in summer is disturbed by a sudden storm in a most annoying manner and a joyous

state of things changed into what is disagreeable, so do children's ailments take place unexpectedly in the most beautiful seasons of early life. And so it happened with me. I had just purchased Fortunatus with his bag and wishing-cap, when a feeling of indisposition and fever befell me which announced the smallpox. Inoculation for it was still always regarded by us as very problematical, and though popular writers already recommended it intelligibly and forcibly, yet the German physicians hesitated about an operation which seemed to forestall Nature. Speculative Englishmen, therefore, came to the Continent, and for the sake of a considerable fee inoculated the children of such persons as they found well off and free from prejudice. Still the majority were always exposed to the same complaint; the disease raged through families, killed and disfigured many children, and few parents dared to avail themselves of a method, the probable efficacy of which had been confirmed in a variety of cases. Our house was struck by the evil, and it attacked me with special violence. My whole body was sprinkled over with pustules, my face covered, and for several days I lay blind and in great pain. The utmost possible alleviation was tried, and they promised me heaps of gold if I would keep myself quiet and not increase the evil by rubbing and scratching. I controlled myself; meanwhile, according to the prevailing prejudice, they kept us as warm as possible and so made the malady worse. At last, after a miserable time, there fell as it were a mask from my face, without the pocks leaving a visible trace upon the skin, but my features were noticeably altered. I myself was content to see the light of day again and by degrees to lose my spotted skin, but others were unmerciful enough to remind me of my former condition, especially a very lively aunt, who had previously idolised me, could seldom even in later years look on me without exclaiming: "The devil, cousin,<sup>1</sup> what a fright you have become!" Then she related to me in detail how she had formerly amused herself with me, what a sensation she had excited when she carried me about; and so I found out early that people often make us suffer painfully for the pleasure which we have afforded them.

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<sup>1</sup> Here used in the sense of "nephew."

I was not spared measles, nor chicken-pox, as the torments of youth are called, and each time I was assured that it was good luck that this malady was now got for ever. But, unfortunately, another again threatened in the background and advanced. All these things increased my disposition to reflection, and as I, in order to withdraw myself from the torture of impatience, had already often practised myself in endurance, the virtues which I had often heard praised among the Stoics seemed to me more worthy of imitation, and all the more so as something similar was recommended in the Christian teaching of patience.

While on the subject of these family troubles I will take the opportunity of mentioning a brother, three years younger than myself, who was attacked by that infection and suffered not a little from it. He was of a tender nature, quiet and peculiar, and we never became really friends. Besides, he scarcely survived the years of childhood. Of several brothers and sisters born later I remember only one very beautiful and charming girl, who soon passed away, so that after the lapse of a few years my sister and I found ourselves left alone, and became therefore all the more intimately and affectionately attached to one another.

These maladies and other unpleasant interruptions were in their results doubly troublesome, for my father, who seemed to have laid out for himself a special programme of education and instruction, wanted to make up for every delay, and imposed double lessons on the convalescents, which were not difficult for me to accomplish, but were burdensome, because they stopped, and to a certain extent repressed, my inward development.

From these didactic and pedagogic afflictions we took refuge ordinarily with our grandparents. Their house stood in the Friedberg Street and seemed formerly to have been a fortress, for when you came up to it there was nothing to be seen but a large gate with battlements, which on both sides adjoined two neighbouring houses. On entering, after we had passed through a small corridor we reached at last a fairly large court, surrounded by buildings of irregular size, which were all joined into one dwelling. Usually we hastened at once into the garden, which extended behind the buildings to a considerable length as well as breadth and was very well kept. The walks for the most part were

skirted by vine trellises ; one part of the space was given up to vegetables, another part to flowers, which from spring to autumn adorned the borders as well as the beds. The long wall with a southern aspect was used for some well-trained espalier peach trees, of which the forbidden fruit throughout the summer ripened temptingly before us. We rather avoided this side, however, because we could not here satisfy our dainty appetites, and turned to the opposite side, where an interminable row of currant and gooseberry bushes opened up to our greed a continuity of harvests till the autumn. No less important in our estimation was an old, high, wide-spreading mulberry tree, as well for its fruit as also because we were told that the silkworms were fed from its leaves. In this peaceful region my grandfather was found every evening tending the finer growths of fruit and flowers with a leisurely kind of activity and with his own hand, while a gardener did the heavier work. He never grudged the great trouble which is necessary for maintaining and increasing a fine show of pinks in bloom. He himself carefully tied the branches of the peach trees in fan shape to the espaliers in order to promote a rich and satisfactory growth of the fruit. The sorting out of the bulbs of tulips, hyacinths, and kindred plants, as well as the care of the same, he entrusted to no one, and I still remember with pleasure how diligently he busied himself with the grafting of the different kinds of roses. In order to protect himself from the thorns he put on a pair of those old-fashioned leather gloves of which three pairs at a time were handed over to him every year at the Pipers' Court, and so he was never without them. He also wore a loose dressing-gown and on his head a folded black velvet cap, so that he seemed to represent something between Alcinous and Laertes. All this garden work he carried on just as regularly and with as much precision as his office work ; for, before he came downstairs, he always had the register of the causes for the next day brought into order, and read the records of the day's proceedings. In the morning he drove to the Town Hall, dined after his return, then dozed in his arm-chair, and one day passed like another. He spoke little, and showed no trace of excitement. I cannot remember to have ever seen him angry. All his surroundings were old fashioned. In his panelled room I never perceived any

change. His library contained only the earliest descriptions of travel, sea voyages, and discoveries of countries. In general I can remember no condition which could have given me such a feeling of uninterrupted peace and eternal duration.

The reverence, however, which we felt for this worthy old man was raised to the highest point by the conviction that he possessed the gift of prophecy, especially in things which concerned himself and his destiny. It is true that he never expressed himself with decision and in detail to anyone except my grandmother, yet we all knew that he was informed of what was going to happen by significant dreams. Thus, for example, he assured his wife at the time when he was among the junior councillors that at the next vacancy he would obtain the place which was left open on the bench of sheriffs. And when soon afterwards one of the sheriffs actually died of apoplexy, he ordered on the day of electing and balloting that everything should be arranged quietly at home for the reception of the guests and those who came to congratulate him. And indeed the deciding golden ball was drawn in his favour. He confided the simple dream, by which he had learned this, to his wife in the following manner : he had seen himself in the ordinary full council assembly, when all had come forward in the traditional fashion. All at once the sheriff who had just died rose from his seat, descended the steps, in the most pressing manner requested him to take the vacated place, and then went out by the door.

Something similar occurred when the chief magistrate departed this life. In such a case they do not delay long about filling the place, because they were always afraid that the Emperor might again exercise his ancient right of appointing that officer. On this occasion about midnight a special session was summoned for the next day by means of the Court messenger. As now the light in his lantern was about to go out, he asked for a bit of candle so that he could continue on his way. "Give him a whole one," said my grandfather to the ladies ; "he has had the trouble on my account." This utterance corresponded with the result : he did become the chief magistrate. What made this circumstance specially remarkable was that, though his representative at the ballot had to draw in the third

and last place, the two silver balls came out first, and so the golden one was left at the bottom of the bag for him.

Entirely prosaic, simple, and without a trace of anything fantastic or marvellous were all the other dreams which became known to us. I remember further that as a boy I rummaged among his books and memoranda, and among other excellent remarks on gardening I found the following : "To-night N. N. came to me and said——"—names and revelation were written in cipher ; or, in the same way : "This night I saw——" The rest was again in cipher, except the conjunctions and other words, from which nothing could be elicited.

It is also worthy of note that people who otherwise showed no trace of prophetic power in his presence for the moment obtained the power by means of sensible evidence of perceiving beforehand events occurring at a distance which were connected with illness and death. But such a gift has not been inherited by his children or grandchildren, who were for the most part vigorous personalities, enjoying life and always matter of fact.

While on this subject I remember with gratitude many kindnesses received from them in my youth. For example, we were occupied and entertained in various ways when we paid a visit to the second daughter, who was married to the druggist Melber. His dwelling and shop lay in the most lively and crowded part of the town. Here we could look down very pleasantly from the windows on the bustle and crowd in which we were afraid of losing ourselves ; and if at first of all the goods in the shop only the liquorice and the gilt gingerbread cakes interested us, yet we gradually became acquainted with a great mass of objects which were bought and sold in such a business. My aunt was the most vivacious of the family. When my mother in younger days was quite happy in being neatly dressed, or in some domestic occupation, or reading a book, this aunt went about in the neighbourhood picking up neglected children, looking after them, combing and carrying them about as she had for a considerable time done with me. At a time of public festivities she could not be kept at home. When a small child, she had already scrambled for the money which is thrown out on such occasions, and the story went, of how she had once got a good deal together and was looking at it with pleasure

in the palm of her hand when it was struck by somebody, so that all her well-earned booty was at once lost. She prided herself no less on the occasion when the Emperor Charles VII. was driving past : during a moment when every one was silent, standing on a corner-stone, she had shouted a loud hurrah into the carriage, and caused him to take off his hat before her and gracefully thank her for this bold salutation. In her house, too, everything was stirring, jovial, and cheerful, and we children were indebted to her for many happy hours.

In a quieter situation, but one suited to her temperament, lived a second aunt, who was married to the clergyman Stark, incumbent of St Catharine's Church. He lived according to his inclination and calling, very much alone, and possessed a beautiful library. Here I first made the acquaintance of Homer, and indeed in a prose translation in the seventh part of Herr von Loen's new collection of the most remarkable travels, under the title of "Homer's Description of the Capture of the Trojan Kingdom," with copperplates ornamented in French theatrical taste. These pictures perverted my imagination to such an extent that for a long time I could only picture the Homeric heroes under these forms. The incidents themselves pleased me beyond words, though I greatly took exception to the work for giving us no account of the capture of Troy and ending so abruptly with the death of Hector. My uncle, to whom I mentioned this blemish, referred me to Virgil, who completely satisfied my demand.

We children naturally in addition to our other lessons underwent continual and progressive instruction in religion. The Protestantism of the Churches, however, was only a kind of dry morality ; no one thought of an intellectual presentation of the subject, and the teaching could satisfy neither head nor heart. Consequently, there were many secessions from the official Church. There were the Separatists, Pietists, Moravians, Quietists, and others differently named and characterised, but they were all animated by the same purpose of drawing nearer to God by means of Christ than seemed to be possible under the forms of the official religion.

The boy heard endless talk of these opinions and sentiments, for the clergy as well as the laity divided themselves

into pro and con. The minority was made up of the more or less dissentient, but their way of thinking attracted people by its originality, sentiment, steadfastness, and independence. All kinds of stories were told of their virtues and the way in which they were manifested. Especially famous was the reply of a pious master tinker, whom one of his guild thought to put to shame by asking who then exactly was his confessor. With cheerfulness and confidence in his own good cause he answered : " I have a very famous one, no one less than the confessor of King David."

Things of this sort may well have made an impression on the boy and led him to similar reflections. In fact, he came upon the thought of drawing immediately nearer to the great God of Nature, the Creator and Upholder of Heaven and Earth, whose earlier manifestations of wrath were long forgotten in the beauty of the world and its manifold blessings in which we participate ; but the way the boy took to attain this was curious.

He had chiefly kept himself to the first article of the Creed. The God, who stands in immediate connection with Nature, crowns and loves it as His work, appeared to him the actual God, who could enter into a closer relationship with man as well as with all else, and would take care of him even as of the movements of the stars, the days and seasons, plants and animals. Some passages of the Gospel stated this explicitly. To this Being the boy could ascribe no form ; he therefore sought Him in His works, and wished to erect an altar to Him in the good Old Testament way. Products of Nature were to represent the world symbolically, and above them a flame should burn and signify the spirit of man yearning for its Creator. Now from the collection of natural objects which the boy possessed, and which had been increased as chance directed, he brought out the best ones and specimens, but how to arrange and build them up was now the difficulty. His father had a beautiful red-lacquered music stool adorned with gilt flowers, in the form of a four-sided pyramid with different elevations, which one found very convenient for quartets, though latterly it had been very little used. The boy got possession of this, and now built up his representatives of Nature in steps, so that it had a thoroughly cheerful and at the same time significant appearance. Now the first adoration of God was to be



celebrated at an early sunrise, only the young priest was not quite decided in what way he should produce a flame, which at the same time should emit a pleasant smell. At last an idea occurred to him which enabled him to combine both, as he possessed fumigating pastilles which, though they did not flame, yet, while glowing, gave out the most delightful smell. Indeed, this gentle burning and smoking seemed to express still better than an open flame that which passes in the heart. The sun had already long risen, but neighbouring houses veiled the East. At last it appeared over the roofs ; at once a burning-glass was taken in hand, and smoking tapers standing in a beautiful china saucer were lighted at the top. All went as was devised, and the devotion was perfect. The altar remained standing as a special adornment of the room which had been given up to the boy in the new house. Every one regarded it only as a well-arranged collection of natural curiosities ; the boy, however, knew better, but kept quiet. He yearned for a repetition of this solemnity. Unfortunately, just as the sun arose most opportunely the china cup was not at hand, so he put the fumigating pastilles direct upon the upper surface of the music stool ; they were lighted, and so great was the devotion of the priest that he did not observe what damage his sacrifice caused until there was nothing more to be done. The tapers had burnt themselves into the red lacquer and into the beautiful golden flowers in a horrible manner, and, as though some evil spirit had vanished, their black, inextinguishable footmarks were left behind. On this account the young priest was greatly embarrassed. No doubt he knew how to conceal the damage with the largest pieces of his show materials, but the spirit for a new sacrifice left him, and this accident was almost regarded as an intimation and warning how dangerous it is to attempt to approach the Deity in such ways.

## BOOK II

ALL that has hitherto been said has reference to that happy and early condition in which countries are found during a long peace. But nowhere does one enjoy such a splendid time with greater comfort than in cities which live according to their own laws, are large enough to contain a considerable number of citizens, and are well placed for enriching themselves by trade and commerce. Strangers find their advantage in coming and going, and are obliged to bring profit in order to gain profit. Even if such cities command no extensive territory, they can be all the more active in their internal prosperity, because their external relations expose them to no costly undertakings or alliances.

In this way during my childhood the Frankforters passed a number of happy years. But scarcely had I, on 28th August 1756, completed my seventh year than that world-famous war broke out which was to exert a great influence on the next seven years of my life. Frederick II., King of Prussia, had invaded Saxony with sixty thousand men ; and instead of a previous declaration of war there followed a manifesto, composed, as it was said, by himself, which contained the causes which moved and justified him in taking such a monstrous step. The world, finding itself appealed to not only as spectator but also as judge, at once divided itself into two parties, and our family was a picture of the great whole.

My grandfather, who as Sheriff of Frankfort had carried the coronation canopy over Francis I. and had received from the Empress a weighty golden chain with her likeness, was, together with some of his sons-in-law and daughters, on the Austrian side. My father, having been appointed as Imperial Councillor by Charles VII. and sympathising sincerely with the fate of that unhappy monarch, inclined to the side of Prussia with the smaller half of the family. Our family gatherings on Sunday, which had continued un-

interruptedly for many years, were soon disturbed. The ordinary misunderstandings which go on among relations by marriage now for the first time found a new form in which they could be expressed. Contention, discord, silence, and separation ensued. My grandfather, who was otherwise a cheerful, quiet, and easy-going man, became impatient. The women vainly tried to quench the fire, and after some unpleasant scenes my father was the first to absent himself completely from the society. Now we rejoiced undisturbed over the Prussian victories, which were usually announced with great jubilation by our vivacious aunt. Every other interest must give way to this one, and we passed the remainder of the year in continued agitation. The occupation of Dresden,<sup>1</sup> the moderation of the King at the outset, the victory at Lowositz, the capture of the Saxons, were so many triumphs for our party. Everything which could be adduced in favour of our opponents was denied or disparaged ; and since the members of the family on the other side did likewise, they could not meet one another in the street without quarrels arising, as in "Romeo and Juliet."

And so my views were Prussian, or, to speak more correctly, those of Frederick, for what did we care about Prussia ? It was the personality of the great King which moved all hearts ; I rejoiced with my father over our victories, most readily copied out the songs of triumph and almost more readily the lampoons against the other party, however poor the rhymes might be. As eldest grandchild and godchild I had since my childhood every Sunday dined with my grandparents ; they were the most enjoyable hours of the whole week. But now I could no more enjoy my food there, for I had to hear my hero calumniated in the most cruel fashion. Here there blew another wind ; here sounded another tune from that at home. My liking for—indeed, my respect for—my grandparents diminished. To my parents I daren't mention anything of this, but I avoided the subject, partly from my own feelings and partly because my mother had warned me. I was therefore thrown back upon myself, and as in my sixth year after the earthquake at Lisbon, the goodness of God became in some measure suspect, so I began, on account of Frederick II., to doubt

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<sup>1</sup> 9th September 1756.

of the justice of the public. My heart was naturally disposed to reverence, and it required a great shock to make my faith waver in regard to anything that was venerable. But, unfortunately, we had been taught good manners and a becoming behaviour, not for their own sake but for the sake of people ; it was always a question what would people say, and I thought that the people must be right good people and would know how to value anything and everything. But my experience was just the opposite. The greatest and most obvious merits were abused and maligned ; the noblest deeds, where not denied, were at least misrepresented and disparaged ; and such base injustice was done to the only man who was openly raised above all his contemporaries, who daily proved what he was able to do—and this was done, not only by the populace but by superior men, among whom, notwithstanding, I was compelled to regard my grandfather and uncles. That he himself belonged to a faction, of that the boy had no conception. He believed all the more that he was right, and dared declare his own opinion for the better one, because he and those who thought with him appreciated the beauty of Maria Theresa and her other good qualities, and even did not grudge the Emperor Francis his love of jewellery and money. That Count Daun<sup>1</sup> was often called a sleepy old fellow, they thought justifiable.

When I now consider the matter more closely, I find here the germ of my disregard—nay, rather, contempt—of the public, which clung to me for a long period of my life and only in later days could be brought into harmony by insight and culture. Suffice it to say at that time already the consciousness of party injustice was for the boy very unpleasant, nay, even injurious, for it accustomed him to withdraw from the society of loved and highly valued persons. The continued succession of warlike events and happenings left the parties neither peace nor quiet. We took a malicious delight in reviving afresh and resharpening every imagined evil and arbitrary dispute, and so we continued to annoy one another until some years later the French took possession of Frankfort and brought into our homes real discomfort.

Although for most of us these important events occurring

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<sup>1</sup> The Austrian Field-Marshal.

in distant regions only served for a topic of impassioned conversation, yet there were others who saw well the seriousness of the times and feared lest by the participation of France the theatre of war might open in our own neighbourhood. We children were kept more and more at home, and they tried to occupy and entertain us in all sorts of ways. With this object in view, the puppet-show which my grandmother had bequeathed was again set up, and indeed arranged in such a manner that the spectators sat in my attic room, but the players and persons managing, as well as the theatre itself as far as the proscenium, found a place in the room adjoining. As a special favour we were allowed to invite some of the neighbours' children, and I thereby at the outset gained many friends; but the unrest which is inherent in children did not let them long remain patient spectators. They interrupted the play, and we had to look out for a more juvenile public which could in any case be kept in order by nurses and servants. The original drama for which the puppet-show had been arranged we had learnt by heart, and at first this was performed exclusively. But we soon got tired of this, so we changed the stock of dresses and scenery and ventured on different pieces, which were really on too large a scale for so small a stage. Although by this presumption we damaged and finally destroyed what we really might have been able to perform, yet this childish entertainment and occupation in many ways exercised and advanced with me the power of invention and representation, my imagination, and a certain technical skill, which perhaps in no other way could have been secured in so short a time, in so narrow a space, and with so little expenditure of money. I had early learned to handle compass and ruler, for the whole instruction which was imparted to me in geometry I at once put into practice, and I occupied myself a good deal with pasteboard work. Yet I did not stop at geometrical figures, little boxes, and such-like, but I invented pretty pleasure-houses, which were adorned with pilasters, outside staircases, and flat roofs; however, little of this was completed.

I was much more persevering with the help of our servant, a tailor by trade, in fitting out an armoury which should serve for our plays and tragedies, which we ourselves performed after we had outgrown the puppet-show. My

playfellows, too, prepared for themselves armouries which they considered to be quite as good as mine ; but I had not rested satisfied with the requirements of one person only, but could fit out several of the small company with every kind of requisite, and made myself, therefore, more indispensable to our little circle. It may easily be imagined that such games were directed to factions, quarrels, and blows, and usually came to a horrible end, with vexation and tumult. In such cases certain of my companions usually held by me, others joined the opposing side, though many changes of parties occurred. One single boy, whom I will call Pylades, egged on by the others, abandoned only once my party, but could scarcely endure for a moment to stand against me in hostile faction. We became reconciled with many tears, and for a long time held loyally together.

I could make him as well as other well-wishers very happy by telling stories, and they specially loved it when I spoke in my own person. It was a great joy to them to know that such wonderful things could happen to me, who was one of their own playmates, nor was it any harm that they did not understand how I could find time and occasion for such adventures since they knew pretty well how I was occupied and of my goings and comings. Nevertheless, for such occurrences, localities had to be selected, if not from another world, yet certainly from another region, and everything had to happen to-day or yesterday. It was they, therefore, who deceived themselves rather than I who hoaxed them. If I had not gradually learned, in accordance with my nature, to work up their visions and conceits into artistic forms, such vainglorious beginnings might easily have had evil consequences for me.

If one considers this impulse closely, one may recognise in it the presumption with which the poet expresses authoritatively what is most improbable, and demands from every one that he should recognise as real that which in some way or other has appeared to be true to him who has invented it. But what is here put forward in general terms and for consideration will perhaps become more evident and interesting by means of an example. I subjoin, therefore, one of these stories which often hovers before my imagination and in my memory, as I had often to repeat it to my playmates.

## THE NEW PARIS

## A BOY'S STORY

I dreamt lately, on the night before Whitsuntide, that I stood before a looking-glass and busied myself with the new summer clothes which my dear parents had had made for me for the festival. The dress consisted, as you know, of shoes of fine leather, with great silver buckles, fine cotton stockings, black nether garments of serge, and a coat of green cloth with gold buttons. The waistcoat belonging to it was of gold brocade cut out of my father's wedding waistcoat. I was curled and powdered, my locks stood out from my head like small wings, but I could not finish my dressing, because I kept confusing the pieces of clothing, and because the first fell from my body when I was about to put on the second. In this great embarrassment a beautiful young man came and greeted me in the most friendly manner. "Oh ! you are very welcome," said I ; " I am so glad to see you here." " Do you know me, then ? " replied he, smiling. " Why not ? " was my equally smiling response. " You are Mercury, and I have often seen pictures of you." " That I am," said he, " and sent by the gods with an important commission for you. Do you see these apples ? " He stretched out his hand and showed me three apples, which he could scarcely grasp and which were as wonderfully beautiful as they were large, and indeed one was of red, the other of yellow, and the third of a green colour. One could not help regarding them as precious stones to which the form of fruit had been given. I wanted to snatch at them, but he drew back and said : " You must first know that they are not for you. You must give them to the handsomest young fellows in the town, who will then, each according to his lot, find wives who will be all that they could wish. Take them, and good luck to you," he said on leaving, and gave the apples into my open hands ; they seemed to me to have become larger. I therefore held them upwards against the light and found they were quite transparent, but soon they expanded themselves upwards in length and became three beautiful little ladies as large as dolls of middle size, whose clothes were of the colours of the aforesaid apples.

They glided gently up my fingers, and when I wanted to snatch at them so as to hold fast at least one, they had already soared high and far, so that I was disappointed. I stood there quite amazed and petrified, held my hands still high up and looked at my fingers, as though there had been something to see on them. But all at once I saw a most charming maiden dancing on my finger-tips, smaller than the others, but very pretty and lively, and because she did not fly away like the others, but stayed dancing now on this finger, now on that, so I looked at her a long time with admiration. Since she pleased me so much, I imagined that I could at last catch her, and made a very skilful grasp at her; but at the moment I felt a blow on the head, so that I fell down quite stunned and did not recover from the state of insensibility until it was time for me to dress and go into church.

During the service I often recalled to mind these pictures, as well as during dinner at my grandfather's house. In the afternoon I wanted to visit some friends as well as to show myself off in my new clothes, my hat under my arm and my sword at my side, and also because I owed them a call. I found no one at home, and as I heard they had gone into the garden, I thought that I would follow them and spend a pleasant evening. My path led me to the fort, and I came to the place which rightly bears the name of "The Bad Wall," for it was always rather uncanny there. I walked slowly and thought of my three goddesses, but especially of the small nymph, and often held my fingers up in the hope that she would again be so kind as to balance herself thereon. I was going forward with these thoughts in my mind, when I saw on my left hand in the wall a small gate, which I did not remember to have seen before. It seemed low, but its pointed arch would have allowed the tallest man to pass through. Arch and wall were most delicately chiselled out by the stone-mason and sculptor, but it was the door itself which first attracted my attention to it. It was of brown and very old wood, and though little ornamented, was fitted with broad bands of brass, worked both in relief and in intaglio; the foliage on these, where the most lifelike birds were sitting, I could not sufficiently admire. Yet to me the most surprising thing appeared to be that there was no key-hole, no latch, no knocker to be seen, and I thought this door



could only be opened from the inside. I was not wrong. I had made no mistake, for when I drew nearer to handle the ornaments, it opened inwards and there appeared a man whose dress was somewhat long, wide, and peculiar ; also his chin was enveloped by a venerable beard, so that I was inclined to take him for a Jew. But he, as though he had guessed my thoughts, made the sign of the Cross, by which he gave me to understand that he was a good Catholic Christian. " Young sir, how came you here, and what are you doing ? " he said, with friendly voice and gesture. " I am admiring," I said, " the workmanship of this door, for I have never seen anything of the kind before, except in some small pieces in the collections of amateurs." " I am glad," he answered, " that you like such workmanship. Inside the door is still more beautiful : come in, if you like." I did not feel quite happy about it. The wonderful dress of the doorkeeper, the isolation, and a something which I cannot explain, which seemed to be in the air, oppressed me. I delayed, therefore, under the pretence of looking still longer at the exterior, and gave a stolen glance into the garden, for it was a garden which opened before me. Just behind the door I saw a large shaded spot ; old lime trees, standing at regular distances from each other, covered it completely with their thickly interlacing boughs, so that most numerous parties could during the hottest part of the day have refreshed themselves in the shade there. I had already trod on the threshold, and the old man knew how to entice me a step farther. To speak truly, I did not resist, for I had always heard that a prince or sultan in such circumstances should never ask if there was danger. I had still my sword by my side, and could I not soon have finished with the old man if he had shown himself hostile ? Accordingly I entered, feeling quite secure ; the doorkeeper closed the door, which bolted itself so gently that I scarcely noticed it. Now he showed me the workmanship on the inside, which was really more artistic, explained it to me, and manifested especial friendliness. And so, feeling completely at ease, I let myself be guided farther into the shaded space by the wall, which formed a circle, where I found much to admire. Niches artistically adorned with shells, corals, and pieces of ore, poured out from the mouth of Tritons plenty of water into marble basins ; in between there were aviaries and

other lattice-work, in which squirrels hopped about, guinea-pigs ran hither and thither, with as many other pretty little creatures as one could wish to see. The birds called and sang to us as we advanced ; the starlings especially chattered the most absurd stuff. One called out, " Paris ! Paris ! " and the other " Narcissus ! Narcissus ! " as clearly as only a schoolboy can say them. The old man seemed always to look at me earnestly while the birds called out thus. I made no sign of noticing it, and had not the time to pay attention to him, for I was well aware that we were walking round and round, and that this shaded place was indeed a great circle which enclosed another much more important one. We had indeed come again to the gate, and it seemed as if the old man wished to leave me ; but my eyes remained fixed on a golden railing which appeared to enclose the middle of this wonderful garden, which I on our walk had found opportunity of observing sufficiently, though the old man knew how to keep me always close to the wall, and therefore at some distance from the centre. Now just as we had got to the door, I said to him, with a bow, " You have been so extremely kind to me that I would venture to make one more request before we separate. May I not look more closely at that golden railing which seems to enclose the inner part of the garden in a very wide circle ? " " Right willingly," he replied, " but then you must submit yourself to some conditions." " In what do they consist ? " I asked quickly. " You must leave behind your hat and sword here, and must not let go my hand while I accompany you." " Most willingly," I answered, and laid my hat and sword on the nearest stone seat. He at once seized my left hand with his right, held it firmly, and led me straight forwards. When we came to the railing my wonder was changed into amazement, for I had never seen anything like it. On a high plinth of marble stood innumerable spears and partisans in rows near one another, which by their curiously adorned upper ends hung together and formed a complete circle. I looked through the intervals and saw immediately behind a gently flowing piece of water, on both sides enclosed with marble, which in its clear depths permitted one to see a large number of gold and silver fishes, which moved about now slowly, now rapidly, now alone, now in shoals. I would gladly have liked to look over the canal in order to see

what there was in the middle of the garden, but I found to my great distress that on the opposite side the water was enclosed with a similar railing, and indeed with so much art that to each interval on this side a spear or partisan from the other exactly fitted ; and so these, together with the other ornaments, made it impossible to see through, no matter in what position one put oneself. Besides, the old man, who still held me fast, prevented me from moving freely. My curiosity meanwhile increased, and I summoned up courage to ask the old man whether one could not pass over to the other side. "Why not?" replied he ; "but on new conditions." When I asked about these, he gave me to understand that I must disguise myself. I was quite content to do so. He led me back towards the wall into a small clean room, on the sides of which hung various garments which seemed in general like an oriental costume. I was quickly undressed ; he slipped my hair under a many-coloured net after he had, to my horror, vigorously dusted it. Now I found myself before a mirror in my disguise quite good-looking, and was better pleased with myself than in my stiff Sunday clothes. I made some gestures and jumped as I had seen the dancers do at the Fair Theatre. While this was going on, I looked into the mirror and saw by chance the reflection of a niche which was behind me. On its white ground hung three green cords, each twisted on itself in a way which was not quite clear to me in the distance. I therefore turned round quickly and asked the old man about the niche as well as about the cords. He brought one down very courteously and showed it to me. It was a green silk band of moderate strength, the two ends of which, joined by a piece of green leather with two holes in it, gave the appearance of an instrument for no very desirable purpose. The thing appeared to me serious, and I asked the old man as to its meaning. He answered me quite composedly and kindly that it was for those who misused the confidence which was here readily granted to them. He hung the cord again in its place and demanded at once that I should follow him ; but this time he did not hold me, and so I walked freely beside him.

My greatest curiosity now was to discern where the gate and bridge might be for passing through the railing over the canal, for as yet I had not been able to make them out.

I therefore regarded very closely the golden fence as we approached it, but for a moment my sight failed me ; pikes, spears, halberds, and partisans unexpectedly began to shake and rattle, and this strange movement ended with all the points sinking against one another, as if two ancient hosts armed with pikes wished to attack one another. The confusion to the eye, the clanging for the ears, was hardly bearable, but astonishing beyond everything was the sight when, falling completely level, they covered the circle of the canal and formed the most splendid bridge one can imagine, for now there lay before mine eyes a most variegated garden.

It was divided into curving beds, which when looked at together formed a labyrinth of ornaments, all with green borders of a low, woolly growing plant which I had never seen before ; all with flowers, each division of different colours, which also being low and close to the ground, permitted me to follow the plan which had been traced out. This lovely sight, which I enjoyed in full sunshine, completely fascinated my eyes. But I hardly knew where to set my foot, for the meandering paths were most neatly marked out with blue sand, which seemed to form on the earth a darker sky or a sky seen in water ; and I walked for a time close to my guide, with my eyes directed to the ground, till at last I was conscious that in the middle of this round of beds and flowers there was a great circle of cypresses or poplar-like trees, through which one could not see because the lowest branches seemed to spring out of the ground. My guide, without exactly taking the shortest way, led me nevertheless immediately to that centre, and how astonished was I when, on entering the circle of the high trees, I saw the piazza of a magnificent garden house, which seemed to have similar views and entrances on the other sides ! A heavenly music which issued from the building charmed me still more than this pattern of architecture. I fancied that I heard now a lute, now a harp, now a cithern, now something tinkling, which did not accord with any of these instruments. The gate to which we came opened after a slight touch from the old man, but how amazed was I when the door-keeper who came out was exactly like the pretty maiden who had danced on my fingers ! She greeted me as though we were already known to one another, and asked me to come in. The

old man remained behind, and I went with her through a vaulted and beautifully decorated short passage to the middle hall, the splendid dome-like ceiling of which attracted my notice at my entrance and filled me with astonishment. Yet my eyes could not long remain there, for a still more fascinating spectacle allured them. On a carpet just under the middle of the dome sat three women in a triangle, clad in three different colours, one red, the other yellow, the third green. The seats were gilt and the carpet a perfect flower-bed. In their arms lay the three instruments which I had distinguished outside, for, being disturbed by my arrival, they had stopped their playing. "Welcome," said the middle one, who sat with her face turned towards the door, in a red dress and with the harp. "Sit down by Alert, if you are a lover of music."

Now I saw for the first time that there was a fairly long bench placed obliquely before them on which a mandolin lay. The kind maiden took it up, sat down, and drew me to her side. Now I looked also at the second lady on my right; she had on the yellow dress and a cithern in her hand; and if the harp player was distinguished in form, grand in features, and magnificent in deportment, so one might notice that the cithern player was a graceful, cheerful creature. She was a slender blonde, but the other had dark brown hair. The variety and unity of their music could not prevent me from regarding the third beauty in the green dress, whose lute-playing had for me something touching and at the same time striking. She was the one who seemed to pay most attention to me, and her playing seemed directed to me, only I could not make much of her, for she seemed to me now tender, now whimsical, now frank, now self-willed, according as she changed her manner and way of playing. Sometimes she seemed to wish to move me, sometimes to tease me; yet, do what she would, she got little out of me, for my small neighbour, with whom I sat elbow to elbow, had gained me entirely for herself; and while in those three ladies I saw quite clearly the sylphs of my dream, and recognised the colours of the apples, I well understood that I had no right to detain them. I would rather have carried off the small pretty one, if the blow which she had given me in my dream had not remained too clearly in my memory. Hitherto she kept herself quite

quiet with her mandolin, but when her mistresses had ceased, they bid her play some pleasant little piece. She had scarcely tinkled some quite stirring dance tunes when she jumped up ; I did the same. She played and danced. I was hurried on to accompany her steps, and we led a kind of small ballet, with which the ladies seemed satisfied, for as soon as it was finished, they commanded the little girl to refresh me with something nice till supper should come. I had in fact forgotten that anything else existed in the world outside this paradise. Alert soon led me back to the passage through which I had come. On one side of it she had two well-arranged rooms. In the living-room she set before me oranges, figs, peaches, and grapes, and I ate with great relish the fruits of foreign countries as well as those not yet in season. There was confectionery in abundance. She also filled a cup of polished crystal with sparkling wine, yet I had no need to drink, as I had refreshed myself sufficiently with the fruits. "Now we will play," she said, and led me into the other room. Here it looked like a Christmas fair, but such rich and fine articles one had never seen in a Christmas booth. There were all kinds of dolls, dolls' clothes, and dolls' furniture, kitchens, dwelling-rooms, and shops, and single toys in an endless number. She led me round all the glass cupboards, for in them these artistic works were preserved. But the first cupboards she soon closed again and said, "That is not for you, I know well enough. Here," she said, "we could find building materials, walls and towers, houses, palaces, churches, so as to put together a large town. But this does not amuse me ; we will take something different, which will be pleasant for both of us." Therefore she brought out some boxes in which I saw an army of small soldiers piled upon one another, and I must confess I had never seen anything so beautiful. She did not leave me to examine more closely an individual one, but she took one box under her arm and I took up the other. "We will go over the golden bridge," she said ; "there one can best play with soldiers. The lances quickly give the direction in which one has to set the armies against one another." Now we had arrived on the golden, shaking floor ; under me I heard the water gurgling and the fishes splashing as I knelt down to draw up my columns. They were all cavalry, as it seemed to me. She boasted that she possessed

the Queen of the Amazons as the leader of her feminine host. I, on the other hand, found Achilles and a very stately Greek cavalry. The armies stood facing one another, and a finer sight was not to be seen. They were not flat leaden horsemen like ours, but man and horse were round and solid and most finely worked ; one could scarcely understand how they kept themselves in equilibrium, for they stood by themselves without having any support for the feet.

We had now looked at each of our armies with the greatest satisfaction, when she announced the attack. We had found ammunition in our chests ; they were, in fact, boxes of small well-polished agate balls. With these we were to fight against each other from a certain distance ; it was, however, enjoined that we should not throw with more force than was necessary to knock over the figures, for none of them was to be damaged. On either side the cannonade began, and at first it succeeded to our mutual satisfaction. But when my opponent noticed that I aimed better than she did, and might finally win the victory which depended on the number of survivors that remained standing, she came nearer, and her girlish way of throwing had then the desired result. She laid low a number of my best troops, and the more I protested, the more violently did she throw. This annoyed me at last, and I declared that I should do the same. In fact, I not only came nearer, but threw in anger and more violently, so that it was not long before a couple of her small Amazons were broken in pieces. In her eagerness she did not notice it at once, but I stood petrified when the broken little figures put themselves together again ; Amazon and horse became again a whole, and at the same time fully alive, started off in a gallop from the golden bridge under the lime trees, and, running backwards and forwards, were lost in their career, I do not know how, in the direction of the wall. My fair opponent was hardly aware of this when she burst into loud weeping and groaning, and cried out that I had caused an irreparable loss which was far greater than could be explained. But I, who was already in a state of wrath, was glad to have done her an injury, and threw a couple of the remaining agate balls with force and without looking into the midst of her army. Unfortunately, I hit the Queen, who had hitherto, during our regular game, been excepted. She flew in pieces, and her nearest officers

were also destroyed, but they quickly put themselves together again and decamped like the first, galloping merrily about under the lime trees and disappearing against the wall. My opponent scolded and abused me, but I once in full play stooped down to pick up some of the agate balls which rolled about on the golden lances. My furious wish was to destroy the whole army ; she, on the other hand, was not idle, but sprang at me and gave me a box on the ear, so that my head buzzed. I had always heard that a box on the ear from a girl demanded a hearty kiss, so I seized her by the ears and kissed her repeatedly. But she gave such a piercing cry as frightened even me. I let her go, and that was very fortunate, for at the moment I didn't know what happened to me. The ground beneath us began to shake and rattle ; I quickly noticed that the railings again set themselves in motion, but I hadn't time to consider, nor could I get a footing so as to try. I was afraid every moment of being pierced, for the partisans and lances which had lifted themselves up already tore my clothes. I don't know how it happened, but suffice it to say, my hearing and sight went from me, and I recovered myself from my stupefaction and fright at the foot of a lime tree against which the railing when jerked up had thrown me. When I awoke, my feeling of rage awoke too, which became more violent when I perceived the satirical remarks and laughter of my enemy, who on the other side had come down to the ground somewhat more lightly than I had done. Accordingly, I jumped up, and when I saw the small army scattered around me, with its leader Achilles, who had been driven over with me by the rising up of the rails, I first seized the hero and threw him against a tree. His restoration and flight gave me a double pleasure—a malicious joy combining with the prettiest sight in the world—and I was about to send all the Greeks after him, when all at once water hissing from all sides spurted forth from stones and walls, from ground and branches, and wherever I turned dashed against me crosswise.

My light garment was in a short time completely wet through ; it was already slit, and I did not hesitate to tear it off my body. My shoes I threw away, and so one covering after another ; indeed, I found it at last very pleasant to let such a shower-bath play over me on a warm day. Stark naked, I strode gravely along between these welcome waters



and thought to enjoy myself for some time. My wrath cooled down, and I wished for nothing better than a reconciliation with my small opponent. But, in a trice, waters stopped and I now stood wet on a thoroughly saturated ground. The presence of the old man, who unexpectedly came before me, was in no way welcome. I could have wished to be able, if not to hide, at least to conceal myself. The shame, the cold shivering, the effort to cover myself in some degree, made me cut a most pitiable figure ; the old man took the opportunity of making the greatest reproaches against me. "What prevents me," he exclaimed, "from seizing one of your green cords and fitting it, if not to your neck, at any rate to your back ?" This threat annoyed me greatly. "Beware of such words," I cried out, "yea, even of such thoughts, for otherwise you and your mistresses will be lost." "Who then are you," said he defiantly, "that you dare to speak like that ?" "A favourite of the gods," said I, "on whom depends whether those girls shall find worthy husbands and lead a happy life, or whether he will have them pine away and grow old in their magic cloister." The old man went back a few steps. "Who has disclosed this to you ?" he asked, astonished and thoughtfully. "Three apples," I said—"three jewels." "And what reward do you require ?" he asked. "Before all things, the little creature," I replied, "who has brought me into this accursed condition." The old man threw himself down before me, without being afraid of the damp and clammy soil ; then he stood up, without being wetted, took me kindly by the hand, led me into that hall, clad me again quickly, and I was soon once more decked out in my Sunday clothes and my hair frizzled as before. The door-keeper did not speak another word, but before he led me across the threshold, he stopped me and showed me some objects on the wall over the road, while at the same time he pointed backwards to the door. I understood him well ; he wished that I should imprint the objects on my mind, so that I could more certainly find the door again, which had unexpectedly closed behind me. I noticed carefully what stood opposite to me. Above a high wall there projected the boughs of a very old nut tree, which partially covered the cornice at the top. The boughs reached down to a stone tablet, the ornamental border of which I could well recognise, but the

inscription on it I could not read. It rested on the corbel of a niche, in which an artificially wrought fountain poured water from cup to cup into a great basin, which made, as it were, a small pool and lost itself in the ground. Fountain, inscription, nut tree—all stood directly over one another ; I wanted to paint it as I saw it.

Now it can well be understood how I passed the evening and many a following day, and how often I repeated to myself these stories which even I could scarcely believe. As soon as it was possible for me, I went again to the Bad Wall at least to refresh my memory with these signs and to look at the precious door. But to my great surprise I found everything changed. Nut trees certainly projected over the wall, but they did not stand immediately next to one another. A tablet was also placed in the wall, but far to the right of the trees, without ornament and with a legible inscription. There was a niche with a fountain far to the left, but not in the least like the one which I had seen, so that I almost believed the second adventure as well as the first was a dream, for of the door there was no trace at all. The only thing which consoles me is the observation that these three objects seem always to change their places, for in repeated visits to that neighbourhood I seem to have noticed that the nut trees moved somewhat closer together and that the tablet and fountain also seem to approach one another. Probably, when everything comes together again, the door will again be visible and I shall do my best to take up the thread of my adventure. Whether I shall be able to relate to you what further happens, or whether it will be equally forbidden, I cannot say.

This tale was received by my playmates with great applause, and they passionately tried to persuade themselves of its truth. Without confiding in me or the others, they visited, each alone, the place that had been indicated, found the nut trees, the tablet, and the fountain, but always at a distance from one another, as they at last confessed, for at that age one does not willingly keep silence about a secret. But the dispute first arose here. One asserted that the objects did not stir from the spot and always remained at an equal distance from one another ; a second maintained that they did move, and separated themselves from one another ; a

third was in agreement with the latter as to the first point of their movement, yet the nut trees, tablet, and fountain seemed to him rather to draw near together ; a fourth had seen something still more wonderful—the nut trees were in the middle, but the tablet and fountain were on sides opposite to those which I had mentioned. With regard to the traces of the little door they were not in agreement. Thus they offered me an early example of how people can hold and maintain the most contradictory opinions about a thing which is quite simple and easily investigated. As I obstinately refused to continue my story, the first part was often asked for again. I was careful not to change much in the details, and in the minds of my audience I converted fable into truth by the uniformity of my narrative.

I was averse from falsehood and dissimulation in other respects and, above all, was not in the least frivolous ; on the contrary, an inward seriousness with which I regarded myself and the world was displayed in my outward demeanour, and I was censured often in a friendly way, often in a sarcastic fashion, for a certain dignity which I had assumed. For, though I had no lack of good and excellent friends, we were yet the minority as compared with those who found pleasure in worrying us with wanton rudeness and indeed roused me very rapidly out of those fanciful, self-complacent dreams, in which we only too willingly lost ourselves, I by inventing, and my companions by taking part in them. But we now perceived that, instead of giving ourselves over to effeminacy and fantastic pleasures, we had cause for hardening ourselves in order either to endure unavoidable evils or to counteract them. Among the exercises of stoicism, which I therefore cultivated as seriously as is possible for a boy, belonged the endurance of bodily pain. Our teachers treated us often very unkindly and unskilfully with blows and cuffs, against which we hardened ourselves all the more, as insubordination or opposition were strictly forbidden. Many sports of youth depend upon a rivalry in such endurances, for instance, when they strike each other alternately with two fingers or the whole hand, until the limbs are numbed, or when they endure with more or less steadiness the blows which are meted out in certain games, when in wrestling or romping they don't let themselves be put out by the pinches of opponents who are half overcome,

or when they suppress the pain inflicted for the sake of teasing—yes, even regard with indifference the twitches and ticklings with which young people are so active against one another. Thereby we gain great advantage, of which others cannot quickly deprive us. But as I made a kind of profession of such defiance of pain, the importunities of the others increased, and since rude barbarity knows no limits, so they managed after all to force me out of the limits of my endurance. I give ~~one~~ instance instead of many. The teacher had not come for one lesson ; as long as we children were all together we amused ourselves quite pleasantly, but when those who wished me well had waited long enough, they went away and I remained alone with three of my enemies, who thought they would torment me, shame me, and drive me away. They had left me for a moment in the room, and came back with switches which they had formed by quickly cutting up a broom. I noted their intentions, and because I thought the end of the hour was near, I at once determined not to resist them till the stroke of the clock. They began at once most unmercifully to whip me about the legs and calves in the most barbarous way. I did not move, but I soon felt that I had miscalculated and that such pain very much delayed the minutes. My wrath increased with my endurance, and when the first stroke of the hour sounded, I seized the one who least expected it by the hair and hurled him in an instant to the ground, while I pressed his back with my knee ; the other, who was younger and weaker, who attacked me from behind, I drew with his head through my arm and almost throttled him, while I pressed him against me. Now there was the last still left, and not the weakest, and I had only my left hand for defence. But I seized him by the clothes, and by a skilful turn on my side and a too precipitate one on his, I brought him down and pushed his face against the ground. There was no lack on their part of biting, pinching, and kicking, but I was full of revenge both in my limbs and in my mind. With the advantage I had acquired, I frequently knocked their heads together. At last they raised a terrible cry of distress, and we soon saw ourselves surrounded by all the inmates of the house. The switches which were strewed about and my legs, which I had bared of stockings, soon bore witness for me. They put off the punishment and let me out of the

house, but I declared that in future at the slightest insult from any of them I would scratch out his eyes, tear off his ears, if I did not actually throttle him. This event, although, as usually happens in childish matters, it was soon forgotten and even laughed over, was, however, the cause of these joint hours of instruction becoming less frequent and at last ceasing altogether. I was therefore again, as before, left more at home, where I found my sister Cornelia, who was only a year younger than myself, a companion whose charm was ever increasing. Still, I will not leave this subject without relating some stories of how much unpleasantness I encountered from my companions, for the instructive thing in such moral communications is that a man may learn how things have gone with others and what he has to expect from life, and that he may reflect that, whatever happens, it befalls him as a man and not as one who is specially fortunate or unfortunate. If such knowledge is not of much use for avoiding evil, it is still very serviceable for learning to accommodate ourselves to things, to endure them and even to overcome them.

Another general remark is here in place, namely, that as the children of the cultivated classes grow up, a great contradiction appears. I mean that they are exhorted and trained by parents and teachers to behave themselves with moderation, intelligently and even wisely, to cause no one distress from petulance or annoyance, and to suppress all feelings of hate which may develop in them ; but, on the other hand, while the young creatures are busied with such practice, they have to suffer from others that for which they are scolded and which is strongly forbidden. And so the poor things come into a pitiable strait between natural and civilised conditions, and after restraining themselves for a while become, according to their character, either malicious or violent.

Force must rather be driven out by force, but a child of good disposition, inclined to love and sympathy, knows little how to oppose scorn and ill-will. Though I managed to keep off the active assaults of my companions fairly well, I was by no means a match for their taunts and malicious expressions, because in such cases he who defends himself must always lose. Attacks, therefore, of this sort when they excited my wrath were repelled with physical force, or else

they aroused strange reflections in me which could not remain without consequences. Amongst other advantages which my ill-wishers grudged me was the satisfaction I took in the position which accrued to my family from my grandfather's office of chief magistrate, for, as he was the first of his peers, this had no little influence on his family. And when once, after the Pipers' Court, I seemed to pride myself on having seen my grandfather in the midst of the Council one step higher than the others, throned, as it were, under the picture of the Emperor, so one of the boys said sarcastically that, as the peacock contemplates its feet, I should look at my paternal grandfather who had been landlord of the Willow Inn and would never dare make any claim to thrones and coronets. I at once answered that I was not at all ashamed of it, for it was the glory and honour of our paternal city that all the citizens might consider themselves equal to one another, and that honours and profit should come to each in his own way according to his activities. I was only sorry that the good man had been dead so long, for I had often greatly desired to know him while he was still alive. I had frequently gazed upon his picture, nay, visited his grave, and had at least rejoiced in the inscription on the simple monument of his past life, to which I was indebted for my own. Another ill-wisher, the most malicious of all, took the first aside and whispered something into his ear, while they looked at me in derision. My gall began to rise, and I challenged them to speak out loud. "What is more, then, if you want to know," said the first, "this one meant that you might go looking about for a long time before you found your grandfather." I threatened them more violently if they would not explain themselves more clearly. They then brought forward a story which they were by way of having overheard from their parents; my father was the son of some eminent man who had shown himself willing to assume outwardly the paternal office. They had the impudence to adduce all kinds of arguments, as, for example, that our property was only derived from the grandmother, that the remaining offshoots of the family, who had settled in Friedberg and elsewhere, were alike without property, and there were other reasons of the sort which only derived their weight from malice. I listened to them more composedly than they

had expected, for they stood in readiness to run away if I looked as though I should seize their hair. But I replied quite calmly, and this is what I said : "Life is so sweet that we can regard it as a matter of complete indifference to whom one is indebted for it, for at least it must be derived from God, before whom we are all equal." So they let the matter drop for this time, as they could make nothing of it. We continued to play together, which among children is always a well-recognised means of reconciliation.

By these malicious words, however, I became inoculated with a sort of moral disease, which crept on in secret. I was not displeased with the idea of being the grandson of some eminent man, even if this had not occurred in a lawful way. My sagacity followed up the scent, my imagination was aroused, and my acuteness put in requisition. I began to investigate the statements of these fellows, and found or invented for them new grounds of probability. I had heard little said of my grandfather except that his portrait, with that of my grandmother, had hung in the drawing-room of the old house. After the building of the new one both of these had been kept in one of the upper rooms. My grandmother must have been a very beautiful woman and of the same age as her husband. I remember also to have seen in her room the miniature of a handsome man in uniform, with star and orders, which, after her death during the confusion of the house building, vanished along with many other small pieces of furniture. Such and many other things I stored together in my childish head, and practised early that modern poetic talent which knows how to obtain the sympathy of the whole cultivated world by a wonderful combination of the important events of human life. But as I did not venture to entrust such an affair to anyone or even to ask the most remote questions about it, I was not lacking in a secret diligence in order, if possible, to come nearer to the truth of the matter. Thus I had heard it quite definitely asserted that sons are often wont to be decidedly like their fathers or grandfathers. Many of our friends, especially Councillor Schneider, a friend of the family, had business relations with all the princes and noblemen of the neighbourhood, no small number of whom, both among the ruling and younger branches, had their properties on the Rhine and Main and in the intervening regions. At times

they with special favour honoured their trusty agents with their portraits. I now looked with double attention at these, which I had often seen on the walls from my youth, investigating whether I could not discover a resemblance with my father or indeed with myself, which happened so often as to lead me to some kind of certainty. For now it was the eyes of this one, now the nose of that one, which seemed to me to point to some kinship. Thus these marks led me deceptively backwards and forwards, and though in the sequel I was compelled to regard this reproach as a thoroughly idle story, the impression still remained for me, so that I could not omit examining from time to time critically and testing all the noblemen whose portraits had remained very clearly in my imagination. So true is it that everything which confirms a man inwardly in his conceit, flatters his secret vanity, is so highly desirable, that he does not ask further whether in other respects it can contribute to his honour or shame. Now instead of mingling here serious, indeed reproachful, reflections, I will rather turn away my sight from those beautiful times, for who is in a position to speak fitly of the fullness of childhood? We cannot look at the small creatures who play about in front of us without pleasure, indeed with wonderment, for they generally promise more than they perform, as though Nature, among other roguish tricks which she plays us, here also particularly decided to make sport of us. The first organs which she gives to children to take with them on coming into the world are adapted to the immediate conditions of the creature, which unassumingly and simply makes use of them for its immediate purposes in the easiest way. The child in and for itself, considered with its equals and in circumstances suited to its powers, seems so intelligent and rational that nothing surpasses it, and at the same time so much at its ease, cheerful, and clever that one hardly wishes any further development for it. If children continued growing according to early indications, we should have nothing but geniuses; but growth is not merely development. The various organic systems which constitute one man spring from one another, follow one another, change into one another, supplant each other, and even consume each other, so that after a time scarcely a trace can be found of many aptitudes and many manifestations of ability. Although the natural



abilities of a man have on the whole a decided direction, it will still be difficult for the greater and more experienced judge to declare them beforehand with confidence, though in the retrospect it is easy to notice what has pointed to a future.

I have therefore no intention in these first books of completing fully the stories of my childhood, but I will rather later on pick up and continue many threads which passed unnoticed through my first years. But I must here remark what an increasing influence the events of the war gradually exercised upon our minds and way of life.

The peaceful citizen stands to the great events of the world in a wonderful relationship. They already excite and disquiet him from a distance, and he cannot refrain from an opinion and a sympathy with them, even when they do not affect him. He quickly takes a side, as his character and circumstances determine. But when great fatalities and important changes draw near to him, then together with many outward discomfords there remains that inner discontent which doubles and sharpens the evil for the most part and destroys the good which is still possible. Then he has indeed to suffer from friends and foes, often more from the former than the latter, and he does not know how to protect or maintain his inclinations or his interest.

The year 1757, which we still spent in complete civic tranquillity, nevertheless passed for us in great emotional disturbance. Perhaps no other was so fruitful in events. Victories, exploits, misfortunes, followed one another, swallowed up, and seemed to destroy one another, but the image of Frederick, his name and his fame, floated ere long again above all. The enthusiasm of his admirers became even greater and more animated, the hatred of his enemies more bitter, and differences of opinions, which separated even families, contributed not a little to isolate still more the citizens who on other grounds were separated from one another. For in a city like Frankfort, where three religions divided the citizens into three unequal bodies, where only a few men even of the ruling faith can attain to political power, there must be many well-to-do and educated persons who withdraw themselves, and by studies and favourite pursuits form for themselves an individual and isolated existence. Of such men one must speak both now

and in the future if one wants to represent the peculiarities of a Frankfort citizen of that time.

My father, as soon as he had returned from his travels, had formed the idea that in order to make himself capable of service to the State he would take over one of the subordinate offices and carry it on without a salary, if they would confer it on him without an election. According to his way of thinking and the conception which he had of himself, and in the consciousness of his good intention, he believed that he deserved such a distinction, which was not conformable to law or precedent. Therefore, when his request was refused, he fell into ill-humour and disgust, vowed that he would never accept any post, and so as to make it impossible he procured for himself the title of Imperial Councillor, which the chief magistrate and elder sheriffs bear as a special honour. Consequently, he had put himself on an equality with the citizens of the highest rank, and could not begin again at the bottom. The same motive led him to woo the elder daughter of the chief magistrate, so that on this side also he was excluded from the Council.<sup>1</sup> He now belonged to that set of recluses who never form themselves into a society. They are as much isolated in relation to one another as they are in regard to the whole, and all the more so as in this seclusion the peculiarities of character become more strongly marked. My father, in his travels and in the world outside which he had seen, might have formed a conception of a more elegant and refined mode of life than was customary among his fellow-citizens. In this respect, however, he was not without predecessors and associates. The name of Uffenbach is well known. There was a sheriff of Uffenbach who at the time lived generally respected. He had been in Italy, had applied himself particularly to music, sang an agreeable tenor, and, as he had brought home a fine collection of musical pieces, concerts and oratorios were performed at his home. Now, as he himself sang and held the musicians in great favour, people thought it not quite suited to his dignity, and the invited guests as well as the other people of the county permitted themselves many a jocosé remark on the subject.

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<sup>1</sup> Because father-in-law and son-in-law could not sit in one Council.

I remember, too, a certain Baron von Hakel, a rich nobleman who, being married, but childless, occupied a beautiful house in the Antonius Street fitted out with all the accessories of a dignified position in life. He also possessed good pictures, engravings, antiques, and much else of what accumulates in the hands of collectors and lovers of art. From time to time he invited people of rank to dinner, and was philanthropic in a careful way of his own, since he clothed the poor in his own home, but kept back their old rags and gave them a weekly charity only on condition that they presented themselves to him every time clean and neat in the clothes he had given them. I remember him but indistinctly, as a genial, well-cultivated man, but I recollect more clearly his auction, which I attended from beginning to end, and, partly at the command of my father, partly from my own impulse, bought many things which are still in my own collection.

At an earlier date—so early that I scarcely set eyes on him—John Michael von Loen made a considerable sensation in the literary world as well as in Frankfort. He was not a native of Frankfort, but he had settled himself down there and was married to the sister of my grandmother Textor, whose maiden name was Lindheim. Familiar with the Court and political world, and rejoicing in a renewed title of nobility, he had obtained reputation because he had the courage to take part in the various excitements which arose in Church and State. He was the author of "The Count of Rivera," a didactic novel, the subject of which is evident from the second title, "or, the Honest Man at Court." This work was well received, because it demanded morality even from courts, where as a rule only prudence is required, and so his work brought him affluence and reputation. A second work, therefore, for that reason, could only have more danger for him. He wrote "The Only True Religion," a book which had the object of promoting tolerance especially between Lutherans and Calvinists. On this account he got into controversy with the theologians; in particular Dr Benner of Giessen wrote against him. Von Loen replied; the strife became violent and personal, and the unpleasantness arising from it caused the author to accept the post of President at Lingen, which Frederick II. offered him because he thought he saw in him an enlightened man,

free from prejudice and not indisposed to the changes which had already gone much further in France. His former fellow-countrymen, whom he left with some displeasure, assumed that he was not content there, in fact that he could not be content, because a place like Lingen was in no way comparable to Frankfort. My father, too, was doubtful about the happiness of the President, and was sure that the good uncle would have done better not to mix himself up with the King, because it was above all dangerous to come into close relations with him, however extraordinary a man he might otherwise be ; for it had been seen how disgracefully the celebrated Voltaire, on the requisition of the Prussian Resident Freitag, had been arrested in Frankfort, though formerly he had stood so high in favour and had been looked upon as the King's instructor in French poetry. On such occasions there was no lack of reflections and examples to warn men from courts and the service of princes, of which a native of Frankfort could scarcely form a conception.

Dr Orth, an excellent man, I will here only mention by name, because I have not so much to erect a monument to deserving citizens of Frankfort, but rather only to mention them in so far as their reputations or their personality had some influence on me in my earliest youth. Dr Orth was a rich man, and belonged to those who never took part in the Government, though his knowledge and penetration would have qualified him to do so. The antiquities of Germany, and especially of Frankfort, have been very much indebted to him ; he published remarks on the so-called Reformation of Frankfort, a work in which the Statutes of the State were collected. The historical chapter of the same I diligently studied in my youth.

Von Ochsenstein, the eldest of those three brothers whom I have before mentioned as our neighbours, owing to his secluded manner of living, was not remarkable in his lifetime, but was more remarkable after his death because he left behind an order that early in the morning, quite in silence, without an attendant or follower, he should be carried to the grave by manual labourers. This in fact took place, and the affair aroused a great sensation in the city, where one had been accustomed to have funerals with magnificence. All those who on such occasions had to discharge the customary offices were up in arms against

the innovation. But the stout patrician found followers in all classes, and although already such celebrations were sarcastically called "ox burials,"<sup>1</sup> they came into fashion to the advantage of the less well-to-do families, and the funerals accompanied with pomp decreased ever more and more. I cite this circumstance because it affords one of the early symptoms of that disposition to humility and equality which, in the second half of the last century, manifested itself in so many ways from above downwards and burst out into such unlooked-for effects.

There was no lack either of antiquarian amateurs. There were cabinets of pictures, collections of engravings, but especially the curiosities of our country were sought out with zeal and stored up. The older ordinances and decrees of the imperial city, of which no collection had been arranged, were carefully searched for in print and in manuscript, arranged in order of time, and reverently preserved as a treasure of native laws and customs. The portraits, too, of Frankfort citizens, which existed in great numbers, were brought together and formed a special department of the cabinets.

Such men my father seems generally to have taken as his models. He was wanting in none of the qualities which pertain to an upright and respectable citizen. Thus, after he had built his home, he brought his possessions of every kind into order. An excellent collection of maps by Schenk and other geographers eminent at that time, the above-mentioned ordinances and decrees, the portraits, a chest of ancient weapons, a case of remarkable Venetian glasses, cups and goblets, natural curiosities, works in ivory, bronzes, and a hundred other things were separated and displayed, and I did not fail, whenever an auction occurred, to obtain commissions for the increase of the existing stock.

I must make mention of yet another important family of which I had heard much that was strange in my early youth, and of some of whose members I myself lived to see much that was wonderful. I mean the Senkenberg family. The father, of whom I have little to say, was a well-to-do man. He had three sons, who even in their youth distinguished themselves as being thoroughly peculiar. Such things

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<sup>1</sup> Pun upon the name of Ochsenstein.

are not well looked upon in a small city, where no one should make himself conspicuous for good or evil. Nicknames and stories long retained in the memory are generally the fruit of such singularity. The father lived at the corner of the Hare Street, which took its name from a sign on the house, which represented one hare at least, if not three. Consequently, one called these three brothers only the three hares, and this nickname they couldn't get rid of for a long time. But, as in youth great endowments announce themselves through something strange and awkward, so was it the case here also. The eldest was afterwards the celebrated Imperial Councillor von Senkenberg. The second was admitted into the magistracy, and exhibited splendid talents, which, however, he subsequently misused in a pettifogging and infamous fashion, and if he did not injure his native city, he at least injured his colleagues. The third brother, a physician and a man of great integrity, who practised but little and only in the families of the upper classes, maintained even in advanced years a somewhat remarkable exterior. He was always very neatly dressed, and one never saw him in the street but in shoes and stockings, with a well-powdered wig, and his hat under his arm. He walked quickly, but with a peculiar oscillation, so that he was now on this, now on the other, side of the street, and, as he went, formed a complete zigzag. The wags said that he tried by the irregular step to get out of the way of departed souls, who might easily pursue him in a straight line, and that he imitated those who are afraid of a crocodile. Still all this sport and many a jesting remark were changed at last into respect for him when he devoted his handsome dwelling-house, with court, garden, and all that belonged to it in Eschenheimer Street, to a medical establishment, where, in addition to the plan of a hospital, designed exclusively for the citizens of Frankfort, a botanical garden, an anatomical theatre and a chemical laboratory, a fine library, and a house for the Director were established in a way of which no university need have been ashamed.

There was another excellent man, whose efficiency in the neighbourhood and whose writings rather than his personality had a very considerable influence on me : this was Karl Frederick von Moser, who was always mentioned in our district for his business activity. He, too, had a character essentially

moral, which, as the vices of human nature frequently gave him a good deal to do, inclined him to be called pious, and he wished therefore to introduce a more conscientious handling of business life, as von Loen had done for Court life.

The large number of small German Courts gave rise to a number of princes and officials, of whom the first demanded unconditional obedience, and the others for the most part wished only to work and serve according to their own convictions. In consequence there arose an everlasting conflict, with rapid changes and explosions, because the effects of unrestricted proceedings on a small scale become more quickly noticeable and more harmful than on a large one. Many families were in debt, and Imperial Commissioners of Debt were appointed, others found themselves sooner or later on the same road, while the officials either reaped an unconscionable profit or conscientiously made themselves disagreeable and odious. Moser wished to act as a statesman and man of business, and here his hereditary talent, cultivated in a profession, gave him a decided advantage; but he wished at the same time to act as a man and a citizen, and to give up as little as possible of his moral dignity. His "Prince and Servant," his "Daniel in the Lions' Den," his "Relics," describe completely his own condition, in which he felt himself not indeed tortured but cramped. They all point to an impatience in a condition with which one cannot become reconciled and from which one cannot get free. With this way of thinking and feeling he had often to seek other employments, of which, owing to his great ability, there was no lack. I remember him as a pleasant, active, and at the same time gentle man.

The name of Klopstock had already produced a great effect upon us even from a distance. At first people wondered how so excellent a man could have such an odd name, yet one soon became accustomed to it and thought no more of the significance of these syllables. In my father's library I had hitherto only found the earlier poets, especially those who in his day had one by one appeared and become famous. All these had written in rhyme, and my father held rhyme indispensable for poetical works. Canitz, Hagedorn, Drollinger, Gellert, Creuz, Haller, stood in a row in handsome calf bindings: to these were added Neukirch's

“Telemachus,” Koppen’s “Jerusalem Delivered,” and other translations. All these volumes I had carefully studied from childhood and learnt parts of them by heart, on which account I was often called upon to entertain the company. An era full of annoyance opened for my father when, through Klopstock’s “Messiah,” verses which for him were no verses became an object of public admiration. He himself had been careful not to procure this work, but our friend, Councillor Schneider, smuggled it in and supplied it secretly for my mother and her children.

On this man, who was active in business, but read little, “The Messiah” at once, on its appearance, made a powerful impression. Those pious feelings, expressed so naturally, and yet so finely elevated, this delightful language, if one only regards it as harmonious prose, had so won upon the otherwise dry man of business that he regarded the first ten cantos, for of these alone we are properly speaking, as the noblest book of devotion, and he read it through quietly every year once in Holy Week, at which time he managed to free himself from all business, and was refreshed by it for the entire year. At first he thought of communicating his feelings to his old friend, but he found himself greatly bewildered when he became aware of an incurable aversion from a work of such precious contents merely because of what appeared to him an indifferent outward form. As may well be imagined, there was no lack of frequent conversation on this subject, but both parties diverged ever further apart from one another; there were violent scenes, and finally the compliant man was at last content to be silent about his favourite work, so as not to lose a friend of his youth and a good Sunday supper.

To make proselytes is the natural wish of every one, and how greatly rewarded in secret did our friend find himself when he discovered in the rest of the family hearts so openly disposed for his saint. The copy, which he only wanted for one week in every year, was at our service for the remainder of the time. My mother kept it in secret, and my sister and I took possession of it when we could, in our free hours, concealed in some corner or other, learn by heart the most striking passages and especially impress on our memory as quickly as possible the most tender as well as the most violent parts.



Portia's <sup>1</sup> dream we vied with one another in reciting, and in the wild despairing speech between Satan and Adramelech, who had been cast into the Dead Sea, we took parts. The first portion, as being the most powerful, fell to my share ; the other, more plaintive, my sister undertook. The alternate and indeed horrible but still well-ringing curses flowed merely, so to speak, from our lips, and we seized every opportunity of greeting one another with these infernal phrases.

It was Saturday evening in winter. My father always had himself shaved by candle-light, so that early on Sunday morning he could dress himself at his ease for church. We sat on a stool behind the stove and murmured rather quietly, while the barber lathered him, our customary curses. But now Adramelech had to seize Satan with his iron hands ; my sister grasped me with violence, doubtless, quietly enough, but still with rising passion :

"Help me ! I suffer the agony of the gnawing eternal death, once I come with burning, fierce hatred to hate you ! Now I can hate you no more, this is the most cruel grief."

Hitherto, everything had gone tolerably well ; but aloud, with dreadful voice, she called out the following words : " Oh, how I am crushed ! "

The good surgeon was terrified, and poured the basin of soap on to my father's bosom. There was a great commotion, and a strict investigation was held, especially with regard to the accident which might have arisen if one had been already in the act of shaving. In order to remove from us all suspicion of deliberate mischief, we made confession of our satanic characters, and the misfortune which the hexameters had caused was too manifest for them not to be denounced and banished afresh. Thus children and common people are wont to transform what is great and sublime into a game, and even a jest. How otherwise should they be in a position to abide and endure it ?

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<sup>1</sup> The wife of Pontius Pilate.

## BOOK III

NEW Year's Day at that time, owing to the general interchange of personal good wishes, made the city very lively. Those who otherwise did not easily leave home put on their best clothes so that for a moment they might be friendly and courteous to their friends and patrons. For us children the festivity at the house of our grandfather on this day was an enjoyment greatly desired. In the early morning the grandchildren were already gathered together there so as to hear the drums, oboes, clarionets, trombones, and cornets as the military, the city musicians, and whoever else there might be let them sound forth. The New Year's gifts, sealed up and addressed, were distributed by us children among the humbler congratulators, and, as the day advanced, so did the number of those of higher rank increase. First appeared the intimate friends and relations, then the subordinate State officials ; the gentlemen of the Council did not fail to pay their respects to the chief magistrate, and a selected number were entertained in the evening in rooms which throughout the year were scarcely ever opened. The tarts, biscuit cakes, marchpane, and sweet wine exercised the greatest charm on us children, and, besides, the chief magistrate as well as the two burgomasters received annually from two institutions a piece of silver which was bestowed on the grandchildren and godchildren in a regular gradation. In fine, this festival lacked nothing on a small scale of those things which annually glorify the greatest.

The New Year's Day of 1757 was for us as desirable and pleasant as any of the former ones, but for the older people it was full of import and foreboding. People had become accustomed to the passage of the French troops, which occurred with frequency, but still more often in the last days of the past year. According to the ancient custom of the imperial city, the warder of the chief tower sounded his trumpet as often as the troops approached, and on this

New Year's Day he did not want to stop, which was a sign that greater armies were in motion from more quarters. Indeed, on this day they actually marched through the city in greater masses ; people ran to see them pass by. We had generally been accustomed to see them march by only in small parties, but these gradually increased without our wishing to hinder them or being able to do so. In short, on 2nd January, after a column had passed through Sachsenhausen over the bridge, through the Fahrgasse, and arrived at the Police Guard House, it halted, overpowered the small company which escorted it, took possession of the aforesaid Guard House, marched down the Zeile, and after a slight resistance, the main guard was also obliged to yield. In an instant the peaceful streets were changed into a theatre of war. The troops remained and bivouacked until provision should be made for them by regular billeting.

This unexpected burden, unheard of for many years, powerfully oppressed the easy-going citizens, and to no one could it be more burdensome than to my father, who was obliged to receive foreign occupants into his home, which was only just completed, and to open for them his well-furnished reception rooms, which were usually closed, and to give up to the caprices of strangers that which he was wont to order and arrange with such exactitude ; he, who was to begin with a partisan of Prussia, was obliged to see himself besieged by the French in his rooms. It was the most miserable thing that could happen to him, holding such views as he did. Had it been possible for him to take the matter in a lighter vein, as he spoke French well and could behave with dignity and grace in the world, he might have spared us many a troublesome hour, for we had quartered on us the King's Lieutenant, who, though he was a military personage, had only to settle civil matters, disputes between soldiers and citizens, questions of debt, and quarrels. His name was Count Thorane,<sup>1</sup> from Grasse in Provence, not far from Antibes. He was a tall, thin, stern figure, his face much disfigured by smallpox, with fiery black eyes and a dignified, reserved demeanour. His first entrance was at once favourable to the inmates of the house. They

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<sup>1</sup> Born 1719, died 1794. When he came to Frankfort he was just forty years old.

spoke of the different rooms which would be partly given up and partly set aside for the family, and when the Count heard mention of a picture room, he at once requested, although it was already night, permission to look at the pictures at least cursorily by candle-light. He took very great pleasure in these things and showed himself most obliging to my father, who accompanied him, and when he heard that most of the artists were still alive, living in Frankfort and the neighbourhood, he assured us that he desired nothing more than to make their acquaintance as soon as possible and to employ them.

But even this approach on the side of art could not alter the feelings of my father nor bend his character. He allowed to happen what he could not prevent, kept himself at a distance in inactivity, and the unusual things which now went on before him became intolerable to him even in the smallest detail. Meanwhile Count Thorane behaved himself in an exemplary manner. He never once wanted to nail his maps on the walls for fear of damaging the new hangings. His people were skilful, quiet, and orderly, but, in truth, for the whole day and part of the night there was no rest for him, for one complainant followed another, arrested persons were brought in and led out, and all officers and adjutants were admitted to his presence ; as besides the Count kept open house every day, it made in the moderate-sized dwelling, adapted for only one family, with but one open staircase running from top to bottom, a movement and a buzzing such as there is in a beehive, though all went forward in an orderly manner, with gravity and severity.

As mediator between a gloomy head of the house, daily tormenting himself more with hypochondriacal fancies, and a well-wishing but very earnest and precise military guest there was fortunately an agreeable interpreter. He was a handsome, portly, cheerful man, a citizen of Frankfort who spoke French well, knew how to adapt himself to everything, and only treated various little annoyances as a joke. With the help of this man, my mother represented to the Count the position she was in owing to the state of her husband's mind. He had explained the matter so skilfully—the new house which was not quite finished, the naturally retiring nature of the owner, his occupation in the upbringing

of his family, and what else could be said to the same effect—that the Count, who in his position took the greatest pride in justice, incorruptibility, and honourable conduct, resolved here also to behave in an exemplary manner to those on whom he was quartered ; and indeed he kept his resolution inviolable during the several years he stayed with us.

My mother possessed some knowledge of Italian, which language was not altogether strange to any member of the family. She therefore at once determined to learn French ; for this purpose the interpreter, for whose child she had stood godmother in these troublous times, and who now as an intimate friend felt a redoubled interest in our house, devoted every spare moment to his child's godmother—for he lived just opposite—and taught her before everything those phrases which she would have to use in her personal intercourse with the Count. This had the best result. The Count was flattered by the trouble which the mistress of the house had taken at her time of life, and as he had a cheerful, witty vein in his character, and also willingly practised a certain formal gallantry, there arose in consequence the best relationship, and the allied godparents could demand what they wanted.

As already said, if it had been possible to make my father feel cheerful, these changed circumstances would have been less oppressive. The Count practised the severest disinterestedness ; he even refused gifts which were suited to his position ; the most trifling thing that might have looked like a bribe he rejected with anger, and even punished ; his people were strictly forbidden to put the proprietor of the house to the least expense. On the other hand, we children were well provided with dessert. I take this opportunity of giving an idea of the simplicity of those times by mentioning that my mother grieved us excessively one day, because she poured away the ices that had been sent to us from table, as it seemed to her impossible that the stomach could put up with real ice, even though it were ever so much sugared.

Besides these dainties which we gradually learnt to enjoy very well and to digest with ease, it seemed to us children very pleasant to be released in some degree from fixed hours of study and severe discipline. The bad temper

of my father increased ; he could not resign himself to what was unavoidable. How much he worried himself, my mother, the interpreter, the councillors, and all his friends, only in order to be rid of the Count ! In vain they represented to him that the presence of such a man in the house under the given circumstances was a real benefit, that a constant succession, it might be officers or privates, would follow, if the Count changed his quarters. None of these arguments had any effect upon him. The present seemed to him so intolerable that his ill-humour prevented him from perceiving that anything worse could follow.

In this way his activity, which he had been accustomed chiefly to exercise upon us, was impaired. The lessons which he gave us no longer required the same exactness, and we sought to satisfy our curiosity about military and other public things as much as possible not alone in the house, but also in the streets, which was the more easily done because the front door, open day and night, was guarded by sentries who did not bother themselves about the running to and fro of restless children.

The numerous affairs which were settled before the judgment seat of the King's Lieutenant had thereby a special charm, because he laid particular stress on accompanying his decisions at the same time with a witty, clever, and lively turn. What he decreed was strictly just ; the way in which he expressed it was humorous and piquant. He seemed to have taken the Duke of Ossuna<sup>1</sup> for model. Scarcely a day passed but that the interpreter related to us and our mother some anecdote or another for our amusement. The lively man had made a small collection of such Solomon-like decisions ; I remember only the general impression without finding in my memory any special instance. By degrees we came to know more and more of the remarkable character of the Count. He was himself most clearly conscious of his peculiarities, and as he was likely to have certain times in which a kind of ill-humour, hypochondria, or what one may call the blue devils, overpowered him, he withdrew into his room at such hours, which often prolonged themselves into days, saw no one but

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<sup>1</sup> A Spanish Grandee, Viceroy of Naples in the seventeenth century, well known for his witty and malicious remarks.

his servant, and even in urgent cases could not be moved so as to give audience. But as soon as the evil spirit left him, he appeared as before, mild, cheerful, and active. From what his valet St Jean said, a small, thin man of cheerful temper, one could conclude that in earlier years, being overpowered by such hypochondriacal depression, he had caused some great misfortune, and was now seriously anxious to guard himself from similar aberrations when he occupied such an important position which was exposed to the eyes of the whole world. The Count in the early days of his arrival had all the Frankforter painters summoned to him—namely, Hirth, Schütz, Trautmann, Nothnagel, and Junker. They showed the pictures which they had finished, and the Count bought those that were for sale. For him my bright, pretty garret in the roof was cleared out and at once transformed into a cabinet and studio, for he intended to set to work all the artists for a long time, but especially Seekatz of Darmstadt, whose pencil with its natural and simple representations highly pleased him. He therefore had sent to him from Grasse, where his elder brother was supposed to possess a beautiful house, the dimensions of all the rooms and cabinets; then he considered with the artists the divisions of the walls and decided on the size of the large oil paintings to be made, which were not to be put into frames, but fixed on the walls like pieces of tapestry. And here the work went forward with zest. Seekatz understood landscapes, in which old men and children, painted directly according to nature, were a splendid success. The young men would not succeed so well with him; they were mostly too thin, and his women were displeasing for the opposite reason; for, as he had a small, fat, good, but unpleasant-looking wife, who would not let him have any other model but herself, nothing agreeable could be produced. He was also obliged to exceed the usual size of his figures. His trees had truth, but the foliage was too minute. He was a pupil of Brinckmann, whose pencil in easel work is not without merit. Schütz, the landscape painter, had perhaps the best of the matter. The neighbourhood of the Rhine was quite within his power, as well as the sunny tone which animates it in fine weather. He was not quite unaccustomed to work on a greater scale, and then he showed no lack of execution

and composition. He produced pictures of a cheerful kind.

Trautmann, in the manner of Rembrandt, painted some Resurrection miracles of the New Testament, and alongside of them set fire to villages and mills. One cabinet was specially allotted to him, as I could discover from the designs of the rooms. Hirth painted some good oak and beech forests. His cattle were praiseworthy. Junker, accustomed to the imitation of the Dutch painters who were most attentive to details, could not in the least fit himself into the tapestry style ; however, he contented himself with ornamenting many a compartment with flowers and fruit for a good price.

As I had known all these men from my earliest youth and had often visited them in their studios, and the Count, too, liked to have me about him, I was present at the suggestions, consultations, and orders, as well as at the deliveries of the pictures, and ventured to pronounce my opinion very freely when sketches and designs were handed in. I had already earned among picture fanciers, especially at auctions, which I diligently attended, the reputation of being able to say at once what any historical picture represented, whether it was taken from Biblical or secular history or from mythology ; and even if I did not always hit upon the meaning of the allegorical pictures, there was seldom any one present who understood it better than I did. So I had often even enabled the artists to represent this or that subject, and I now with delight made use of these advantages. I still remember that I composed a detailed essay, in which I described twelve pictures which were to represent the history of Joseph ; some of them were carried out.

After these accomplishments, which at least for a boy were praiseworthy, I will make mention of a small humiliation which befell me in this artistic circle. I was indeed well acquainted with all the pictures which by degrees were brought into that room. My youthful curiosity left nothing unseen and unexamined. Once I found behind the stove a black chest ; I did not hesitate to search for what might be hidden therein, and without reflecting for long, I drew back the bolt. The picture contained therein was indeed not of a kind that one is accustomed to expose to view, and though I at once prepared to bolt it again, I could not do



it quickly enough. The Count came in and caught me. "Who allows you to open this chest?" he asked, with his viceregal air. I had not much to say in answer, and he at once pronounced my punishment in a very stern manner. "You shall not enter the room," said he, "for a week." I made a bow and went out. I obeyed the order most punctually, so that the good Seekatz, who worked in the room, was much annoyed, for he liked to have me about him; and, out of a little spite, I carried my obedience so far that the coffee which I was accustomed to bring to Seekatz I put down on the threshold, when he was accordingly obliged to get up from his work to fetch it, which he took so ill that he had almost become angry with me. But it now seems necessary to explain in a more detailed manner, and to make clear how I managed to get through, more or less easily, with the French language, which I had not learned. Here, too, came to my assistance my natural gift of grasping easily the tone and sound of a language, its movement, accent, and other outward peculiarities. I knew many words from the Latin, Italian supplied still more, and in a short time I learnt so much by listening from servants and soldiers, sentries and visitors, that I was able, if not to mingle in the conversation, at least to manage a few questions and answers. But this was all but little in comparison with the advantage which the theatre brought me. From my grandfather I had received a free ticket which I made use of every day, contrary to my father's wish, but with the support of my mother. Here I sat now in the pit before a foreign stage and observed all the more the action, the expression by gesture and speech, as I understood little or nothing of what was spoken, and my entertainment could only be got from the play of action and tone of voice. Of comedy I understood least, because it was spoken with rapidity and had reference to things of common life, the expressions of which were quite unknown to me. Tragedy was not so often acted, and the measured step, the rhythm of the Alexandrines, the generality of the expression, made it for me in every way more intelligible. It was not long before I took Racine in hand, which I found in my father's library, and declaimed pieces in the theatrical manner as the organ of my ear and the organ of speech, so nearly akin to that, had caught them, and that with great animation,

though I could not as yet have been able to understand the connection of a whole speech. Indeed, I learned by heart whole passages which for a child are almost incomprehensible, and had accustomed myself to recite them in the tone of the Protestant preachers. The versified French comedy was then very popular, pieces by Destouches, Marivaux, Le Chaussée,<sup>1</sup> were often played, and I can still clearly remember many characteristic figures. Of those of Molière I recollect less. That which made most impression on me was the "Hypermnestra," by Lemièrre,<sup>2</sup> which as a new piece was performed with care and often repeated. A very pleasant impression was made on me by the "Devin du Village,"<sup>3</sup> "Rose et Colas," "Annette et Lubin." Even now I can recall the youths and maidens decorated with ribbons and their gestures. It was not long before the desire stirred within me of myself having a look round the theatre, for which so many an opportunity offered. For as I had not always patience to hear out the whole piece, and spent a good deal of time in the corridors, and played all kinds of games with other children of my own age and in the milder season before the door, there joined us a handsome, lively boy, who belonged to the theatre and whom I had seen in many minor parts, though only casually. He was best able to make himself understood with me because I could turn my French to account with him, and he attached himself to me all the more as there was no boy of his age or nationality in the theatre or elsewhere in the neighbourhood. He was a delightful little swaggerer, chattered charmingly and unceasingly, and knew how to relate so much of his adventures, quarrels, and other strange incidents that he entertained me enormously, and I learnt from him in four weeks more of the language and power of expressing myself than could be imagined, so that no one knew how I had succeeded all at once in the foreign language, as it were by inspiration.

In the first days of our acquaintance he took me with him on to the stage and led me specially to the foyers, where the actors and actresses remained in the intervals and dressed and undressed. The place was neither convenient

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<sup>1</sup> The chief representatives of French comedy at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

<sup>2</sup> French tragic poet, 1723-93.

<sup>3</sup> By Rousseau.

nor agreeable, for they had squeezed the theatre into a concert room, so that for the actors behind the stage there were no separate chambers. In a fairly large room adjoining, which had formerly served for card-parties, both sexes were now mostly together, and they appeared to have as little sense of shame before each other as before us children, if the putting on and changing of dress was not always done with the strictest propriety. I had never seen anything of this kind before, and yet by habit and repeated visits I soon found it quite natural.

It was not long before a peculiar and special interest arose for me. The young Derones, for thus I will name the boy, with whom I continued the acquaintance, apart from his exaggerations, was of good morals and very nice behaviour. He made me acquainted with his sister, who was a couple of years older than we were, and quite a pleasant girl, well grown, of regular form, brown complexion, black hair and eyes ; her whole demeanour had a certain quietude, nay, even sadness about it. I tried to be agreeable to her in every way, but I could not draw her attention to me. Young girls compared with young boys imagine themselves to be very far advanced, and while they aspire to young men, take up the attitude of an aunt to the boy who first directs his inclination to them. With a younger brother of his I had no intercourse.

Often, when his mother was at rehearsals or in society, we found ourselves together in their house. I never went there without handing to the fair one a flower, a fruit, or something else, which she received with very good grace and thanked me most politely, but I saw that her sad look never brightened and found no trace of her having paid any attention to me. At last I thought that I had discovered her secret. The boy showed me behind the bed of his mother, which was adorned with elegant silk hangings, a pastel drawing of a handsome man, observing at the same time with a shy look that it was not Papa, but just as good as Papa ; and as he praised this man and related a great deal in his detailed and boastful fashion, I thought I discovered that the daughter belonged to the father, but the two other children to the family friend. Thus I explained to myself her sad look, and consequently loved her all the more. My liking for this girl helped me to endure the extravagances of her brother,

who did not always keep within bounds. I had often to endure the long-winded accounts of his mighty deeds, how he had often fought without, however, wishing to hurt the other party ; it was all just for the sake of honour. He had always wished to disarm his opponent, and then to pardon him ; indeed, he understood fencing so well that he once got into a great difficulty by sending the sword of his adversary up into a high tree so that one could not easily get hold of it again.

That which much facilitated my visits to the theatre was my free ticket, which, coming from the hands of the chief magistrate, opened the way to all places and therefore even to seats in the proscenium. This, after the French style, was very deep and bordered on both sides with seats, which, confined by a small rail, mounted in several rows one behind another so that the first seats were but little raised above the stage. The whole was considered a place of special honour ; as a rule, only officers made use of the same, though the proximity of the actors destroyed, I will not say all illusion, but all enjoyment. I have thus experienced and seen with my own eyes every use and abuse over which Voltaire complained so much. If, when the house was very full and at the time troops were passing through the town, officers of distinction strove for this place of honour, which was usually already occupied, some rows of benches and chairs in the proscenium were placed on the stage itself and there was nothing left for heroes and heroines but to reveal their secrets in a very limited space between uniforms and orders. I have seen the "Hypermnestra" itself performed under such circumstances.

The curtain did not fall between the acts, and I must mention further a peculiar custom which I found very astonishing, for what is contrary to art is to me as a good German boy quite unendurable. The theatre indeed was regarded as the greatest place of sanctity, and a disturbance occurring there would have been censured as the greatest crime against the majesty of the public. Two grenadiers with their arms grounded stood therefore in all corridors on both sides of the back scene in full view, and were witnesses of all that went on in the bosom of the family. Since, as I have said, the curtain was not let down between the acts, two others, when the music struck up, relieved guard,

by coming from the wings quite directly in front of the first, who retired in the same measured manner. Now if such an arrangement was certainly calculated to destroy all that in the theatre is called illusion, this was all the more striking as it was done at a time when, according to the principles and examples of Diderot, the most simple naturalness was demanded on the stage and a perfect deception was given out as the special aim of the theatrical art.<sup>1</sup> Tragedy, however, was released from such a military-police arrangement, and the heroes of antiquity had the right of watching over themselves; the aforesaid grenadiers, nevertheless, stood near enough behind the wings.

I will also mention that I have seen Diderot's "Father of a Family" and "The Philosophers" of Palissot, and in the latter piece I can still well remember the figure of the philosopher who goes on all-fours and bites into a raw head of lettuce.

All this theatrical variety could not keep us children always in the theatre. In fine weather we played in front of it, and in the vicinity we committed all kinds of absurdities which, especially on Sundays and festivals, were by no means in keeping with our outward appearance, for on those days I and my companions appeared dressed, as I described myself in that tale, with the hat under the arm and a small sword, the hilt of which was adorned with a large silk knot. Once when we had long gone on in this way and Derones joined us, it occurred to him to assert that I had insulted him and must fight a duel. I could not in the least understand what was the cause of this, but I let his challenge stand, and was about to draw my sword. But he assured me that in such cases it was customary to go to secluded spots so as to be able to settle the affair more conveniently. We therefore went behind some barns and arranged ourselves in a suitable position. The duel took place in a somewhat theatrical manner, the blades clashed, all the thrusts went out on one side; however, in the heat of the combat he remained with the point of his sword lodged in the knot of my hilt. This was pierced, and he assured me that he had now received the most complete

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<sup>1</sup> These principles Diderot carried out in his plays, "Le Père de Famille" and "Le Fils Naturel."

satisfaction, embraced me at once, certainly in a most theatrical manner, and we went into the nearest coffee house so as to refresh ourselves after our mental agitation with a glass of almond milk and to unite the ancient bond of friendship ever more firmly.

I will take this opportunity of mentioning another adventure which I also met with at the theatre, though at a later time. I was sitting with one of my companions very quietly in parterre, and we looked with pleasure on a *pas seul* dance which was performed with much skill and grace by a good-looking boy about our own age, who was the son of a travelling French dancing master. After the manner of dancers, he was dressed in a tight waistcoat of red silk, which, ending in a short hoop-petticoat like a runner's apron, floated above the knee. We had paid the due applause to this young artist with the whole public, when it occurred to me, I don't know why, to make a moral reflection. I said to my companion: "How beautifully the boy is dressed and how well he looks! Who knows in what sort of a tattered jacket he may sleep to-night!" All had already got up, but the crowd prevented us from moving forward. A woman who had sat near me and now stood quite close to me was, as it chanced, the mother of this young artist, and felt herself much insulted by this reflection of mine. Unfortunately for me, she knew German well enough to have understood me, and spoke it just sufficiently to be able to scold me. She abused me violently; who was I, she would like to know, that I should have reason for doubting about the family and good condition of this young man? In any case she considered him as good as I was, and his talents could easily procure a fortune for him, of which I could not let myself dream. She gave me this lecture in the crowd, and made those around me wonder what rudeness I had been guilty of. Since I could neither excuse myself nor get away from her, I was truly embarrassed, and when for a moment she was quiet, I said, without thinking much about it, "Well! why all this noise? To-day red, to-morrow dead."<sup>1</sup> At these words the woman seemed dumbfounded. She looked at me, and withdrew herself from me as soon as it was in any way possible. I thought no more about my

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<sup>1</sup> German proverb: "Heute roth, morgen todt."

words ; only, some time afterwards they came back to me, when the boy, instead of letting himself be seen again, became ill and indeed very dangerously. Whether he died, I cannot say.

Such forebodings by an unreasonably or even improperly spoken word were held in repute even among the ancients, and it is very remarkable that the forms of belief and superstition with all people and in all times have remained always the same.

From the first day of the occupation of our city there was no lack of continual distraction, especially for children and young people. Plays and balls, parades and marching of troops throughout the town, drew our attention hither and thither. The last especially was ever increasing, and the life of a soldier appeared to us amusing and pleasant.

The sojourn of the King's Lieutenant in our house procured for us the advantage of gradually seeing all the important personalities of the French Army and especially of observing close at hand the leaders, whose names were already known to us by their reputation. Thus we looked from stairs and landing-places, as if from galleries, very conveniently upon the generals who passed by. Above all, I remember the Prince Soubise<sup>1</sup> as a handsome, affable man, but most distinctly the Maréchal de Broglie<sup>2</sup> as a younger man, tall, but well built, lively, and looking about himself in an intellectually alert manner.

He came several times to the King's Lieutenant, and it was noticed that the talk was of serious matters. We had scarcely in the first quarter of the year got settled with having strangers billeted on us, when a rumour spread mysteriously that the allies were in Anmarsh, and Ferdinand, Duke of Brunswick, was coming to drive the French from the Main. Of these, who could not boast of any special success in the war, we had not the highest opinion, and after the battle of Rossbach we thought they might be despised. In Duke Ferdinand we had the greatest confidence, and all who had sympathy with Prussia ardently awaited their liberation from the yoke they had hitherto borne. My father was rather more cheerful ; my mother was apprehensive. She

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<sup>1</sup> 1715-87. Was defeated at the battle of Rossbach, 1757.

<sup>2</sup> 1718-1804.

was wise enough to perceive that a small present evil could easily be exchanged for a great calamity, for it was only too clear that the French would not advance against the Duke, but await an attack in the neighbourhood of the city. A defeat of the French, a flight, a defence of the city were it only in order to cover the retreat and to hold the bridge, a bombardment, a sack—all these presented themselves to the excited imagination and gave anxiety to both parties. My mother, who could endure everything except suspense, had her fears brought before the Count by means of the interpreter, on which she received the customary answer in such cases : she might be quite easy—there was nothing to be alarmed about ; she should keep quiet and not speak about the matter to anyone. Numerous troops passed through the city ; we gathered that they halted at Bergen. The coming and going, the riding and running, kept on increasing, and our house day and night was in a state of commotion. At this time I often saw Maréchal de Broglio, always cheerful, at all times alike in his gestures and behaviour, and later on I was glad to find the man, whose appearance had made so good and lasting an impression, mentioned so honourably in history.

Thus, after a disturbed Holy Week, the Good Friday of 1759 arrived. A profound calm announced the approaching storm. We children were forbidden to go out of the house : my father had no rest, and went out. The battle began : I got up to the topmost floor, where, however, I could not see the country round, but could very well hear the thunder of the cannon and the volley-firing of the muskets. After some hours we saw the first signs of the battle in a row of wagons on which the wounded, with various sad mutilations and gestures, were slowly driven past us, in order to be brought to the Convent of St Mary, which had been transformed into a hospital. The compassion of the citizens was at once stirred ; beer, wine, bread, money, were handed over to those who were still able to receive anything. But when some time afterwards one became aware of wounded and captured Germans in the train of carriages, the pity knew no bounds, and it seemed as though every one wished to dispossess himself of everything movable in order to assist his suffering fellow-countrymen. These prisoners, however, were an evidence of a battle unfortunate for the



allies.<sup>1</sup> My father, whose partisanship made him quite certain they would win, had the resolute temerity to go and meet those whom he hoped would be victors, without reflecting that the defeated party must pass over him in their flight. He first betook himself to his garden before the Friedberg gate, where he found everything still and quiet, then ~~he~~ ventured on to the Bornheim heath, where he soon became aware of various scattered stragglers and camp followers, who amused themselves by shooting at the boundary stones, so that the rebounding lead whistled around the head of the inquisitive wanderer. He therefore thought it advisable to withdraw, and learnt after some questioning what the noise of the firing should have already made clear to him—that everything had gone well with the French and that there was no idea of their giving way. Reaching home in ill-humour at the sight of his countrymen wounded and made prisoners, he came quite out of his ordinary self-command. He, too, caused alms to be given to those passing by, but only the Germans were to receive it, which was not always possible, because fate had huddled together friend and foe.

My mother and we children, who had already relied on the Count's word and had therefore passed a fairly quiet day, were highly delighted, and my mother was doubly consoled when, having consulted the oracle of her jewel box by the prick of a needle, she received a very comforting answer, both for the present and the future. We wished our father similar faith and feelings, we flattered him as much as we could, we begged him to take some food, from which he had abstained all day ; he refused our caresses and every enjoyment, and betook himself to his rooms. Our pleasure, however, was not interrupted ; the affair was over ; the King's Lieutenant, who on this day, contrary to his custom, had been on horseback, at last turned back ; his presence in the house was more necessary than ever. We sprang to meet him, kissed his hands, and showed our delight. It seemed to please him. "Well," said he more kindly than usual, "I am glad also for your sakes, my dear children." He at once ordered them to give us sweetmeats, sweet wine, and the best of everything, and went to his room, already

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<sup>1</sup> Prussians, Brunswickers, Hessians.

surrounded by a great crowd of people urging, demanding, and entreating. We now had a dainty repast, were sorry for our good father, who could not take part in it, and pressed our mother to call him in ; but she, wiser than we were, knew how distasteful such gifts would be to him. Meanwhile she had prepared some supper, and would willingly have sent a portion to his room, but such an irregularity he would not excuse even in the most extreme cases ; and after the sweet things had been put out of the way we tried to persuade him to come down to the ordinary dining-room. At last he let himself be persuaded, unwillingly, and we had no idea of the harm we were preparing for him and for ourselves. The staircase ran free through the whole house past all the ante-rooms. My father when he came downstairs was obliged to pass close by the Count's apartment. His anteroom was so full of people that the Count, in order to dispatch several matters at once, decided to come out ; this happened unfortunately just at the moment when my father was coming downstairs. The Count went to meet him cheerfully, greeted him, and said, " You will also congratulate yourselves and us that this dangerous affair has gone off so well." " By no means !" replied my father with wrath ; " would that they had driven you to the devil, even if I had been obliged to go with you." The Count paused for a moment, then broke out angrily, " You shall pay for this," he cried. " You shall not have insulted the good cause and me for nothing."

My father meanwhile had come down composedly, sat by us, seemed more cheerful than hitherto, and began to eat. We were glad of this, and had no idea of the serious way in which he had rolled the stone from his heart. Shortly afterwards my mother was called out, and we had great fun in chattering to our father about the sweet things the Count had given us. My mother did not come back. At last the interpreter entered. At a hint from him we were sent to bed ; it was already late, and we obeyed willingly. After a night which we slept through quietly, we heard of the violent commotion which had shaken the house the previous evening. The King's Lieutenant had ordered my father to be led to the guard-house. The subordinate officials well knew that he was never to be contradicted, yet they had often received thanks for delaying the execution of his orders. This feeling the friendly interpreter, who never

lost his presence of mind, knew how to encourage in them very strongly. Anyhow the tumult was so great that some delay was conceded and excused. He had called out my mother and, as it were, handed over the adjutant to her, so that by prayers and representations she might obtain some postponement of the affair. He himself hurried up to the Count, who with his great self-control had at once withdrawn to his room and rather let the most pressing business wait for a moment than that he should vent the ill-humour which had been aroused in him on an innocent person, and give a decision derogatory to his dignity. The address of the interpreter to the Count, the course of the whole conversation, were often enough repeated to us by the fat family friend who prided himself not a little on the fortunate result, so that I can still describe it from memory.

The interpreter had ventured to enter the cabinet, an act which was absolutely prohibited. "What do you want?" cried out to him angrily the Count. "Get along with you; no one has the right of entering here but St Jean!"<sup>1</sup>

"Well, suppose for a moment I am St Jean," replied the interpreter.

"For that one wants a good imagination. Two such as he don't yet make one like you. Retire!"

"Count, you have received a great gift from Heaven; to that I appeal."

"You think you can flatter me! Don't imagine that you can succeed."

"You have the great gift, Count, even in moments of passion, in moments of rage, of listening to the views of others."

"Well, well, it is just a question of views, to which I have listened too long. I know only too well that they don't like us here and that these citizens look askance at us."

"Not all."

"Very many. What! These cities—do they want to be imperial cities? They have seen their Emperor elected and crowned, and when he, unjustly attacked, runs the risk of losing his lands and submitting to a usurper,<sup>2</sup> if he fortun-

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<sup>1</sup> St Jean was Count Thorane's valet.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick the Great.

ately finds loyal allies, who spend their money and their blood for his advantage, they will not put up with the slight burden in their turn in order that the enemy may be humbled."

"You have indeed known these sentiments already for a long time, and like a wise man have tolerated them, also they are held only by a small number. A few are dazzled by the brilliant qualities of the enemy, whom even you yourself regard as an extraordinary man—a few only—as you are aware."

"Yes, indeed! I have known it and tolerated it too long, otherwise this man would not have dared to utter such insults before my face at the most critical moment. Let them be as many as they please, they shall be punished in the person of their audacious representative and see what they have to expect."

"Only a postponement, Count."

"In some things it is impossible to proceed too quickly."

"Only a short postponement."

"Neighbour, you think to lead me to take a false step; you shall not succeed."

"I will neither lead you to a false step nor restrain you from one. Your decision is right; it becomes the Frenchman and the King's Lieutenant, but consider you are also Count Thorane."

"He has no voice in the matter here."

"But the gallant man has a right to be heard."

"What would he say then?"

"'King's Lieutenant,' he would say, 'you have so long had patience with so many gloomy, unwilling, bungling men, if they did not provoke you too much.' This man has certainly provoked you a good deal, but control yourself, King's Lieutenant, and every one on that account will praise and applaud you."

"You know that I can often stand your jests, but don't abuse my good will. These people—are they then completely blinded? If we had lost the battle at this moment, what would their fate have been? We fight up to the gates, we bar the entrance to the city, we halt, we defend ourselves in order to cover our retreat over the bridge. Do you suppose the enemy would have stood with his hands in his kets? He throws grenades and what he has at hand,

and they set the place on fire wherever they can. This householder—what would he have? In these rooms, I dare say, a bomb might have burst and another would follow after it—in these rooms whose cursed Chinese hangings I have spared and inconvenienced myself by not hanging up my maps. They ought to have spent the whole day on their knees.”

“How many have done that?”

“They ought to have prayed for a blessing upon us and to have gone out to meet the generals and officers with tokens of honour and joy and the exhausted common soldiers with refreshments. Instead of that, the poison of this party spirit destroys for me the fairest, happiest moments of my life, which I have won with so much toil and effort.”

“It is party spirit; but you will only increase it by the punishment of this man. Those who have the same feelings as he has will clamour against you as a tyrant and barbarian; they will regard him as a martyr who has suffered for the good cause; and even those who think differently, who are now his enemies, will see in him only the fellow-citizen, will pity him and, while they admit your justice, nevertheless find that you have proceeded too severely.”

“I have already listened to you too long; now be off with you.”

“Only just hear this! Consider this is the most unheard-of thing that could befall this man, this family. You have had no reason to be edified by the good will of the master of the house, but the mistress has anticipated all your wishes and the children have regarded you as their uncle. By this simple stroke you will for ever disturb the peace and happiness of the dwelling. Yes, I can assure you, a bomb which had fallen in the home could not have caused greater desolation. I have often admired your self-control, Count; give me this time the opportunity of adoring you. A warrior is worthy of honour who considers himself an intimate friend in the house of an enemy; here is no enemy, only a madman. Control yourself and it will redound to your eternal glory.”

“That would have to come about in a strange way,” replied the Count, with a smile.

“Only quite natural,” continued the interpreter. “I have not sent the wife and children to your feet, because I knew that such scenes are distasteful to you, but I will depict

to you the wife and these children—how they will thank you ; I will depict them to you conversing all their life long of the battle of Bergen and of your magnanimity on that day, how they will relate it to their children and children's children, and will know how to inspire even strangers with their own interest for you : an act of this kind can never perish."

" You do not hit my weak side, interpreter ! About posthumous fame I am not in the habit of thinking—that is for others, not for me—but at the moment to do what is right, not to neglect my duty, not to abate a jot of my honour—that is my care. We have already had too many words ; now go and receive the thanks of the thankless, whom I spare !"

The interpreter, surprised and moved by the unexpectedly successful issue, could not restrain his tears and wished to kiss the hands of the Count. But the Count motioned him away and said severely and seriously, " You know I cannot bear such things." And with these words he went into the anteroom in order to attend to pressing business and to hear the claims of so many expectant persons. And so the matter was disposed of, and the next morning we celebrated with the remnants of yesterday's sweetmeats the passing over of an evil, through the threatening of which we had escaped by sleeping.

Whether the interpreter had really spoken so wisely or whether he had only so painted the scene to himself, as one is wont to do after a good and successful action, I will not decide ; at least in the frequent repetition of the same he never varied. Indeed, this day seemed to him both the most anxious and glorious of his life.

How much the Count refused all false ceremony, never accepted any title which did not belong to him, and how in his cheerful hours he had always been full of wit, a small incident will show.

A man of the higher class, but one who belonged to the reserved, solitary Frankforters, thought that he ought to complain about his billeting. He came in person, and the interpreter offered his services, but the other supposed that he did not require the same. He came before the Count with a correct bow and said : " Your Excellency !" The Count returned the bow and also the " Excellency." Struck by this mark of esteem, he bowed himself lower and said :

"Monseigneur !" "Sir," said the Count quite seriously, "we will not go any further, for otherwise we might easily come to 'Your Majesty' !" The other was extremely embarrassed, and could not say a word. The interpreter, standing at some distance and instructed in the whole affair, was mischievous enough not to move, but the Count with great cheerfulness continued, for example, "Sir, what is your name ?" "Spangenberg," replied he. "And I," said the Count, "am called Thorane. Spangenberg, what do you want with Thorane ? Now let us sit down ; the affair shall at once be settled."

And so the matter was quickly arranged, to the great satisfaction of him whom I have called Spangenberg, and the history on the same evening was not only related in our family circle by the malicious interpreter, but embellished with all the details and gestures.

After these commotions, disturbances, and distresses, the former security and thoughtlessness were soon established in which the young especially live from day to day, if it is in any degree possible. My passion for the French theatre grew with every performance. I did not miss an evening, though every time when I sat down to the family dinner after the play and often contented myself with only a few remains, I had to endure the continual reproaches of my father, that the theatre was useless and could not lead to anything. In such a case I called forth all the arguments which are ready to hand for the defenders of the stage when they get into a difficulty like mine. Vice in prosperity, virtue in misfortune, are in the end put right by poetic justice. The splendid examples of misdeeds that are punished, "Miss Sarah Sampson" and the "Merchant from London,"<sup>1</sup> were energetically brought forward by me ; but I often came off the worst when the "Fourberies de Scapin" and others of like sort were on the programme, and I had to be reproached for the pleasure which the public takes in the deceit of intriguing servants and over the successful follies of extravagant young men. Neither party persuaded the other ; my father, however, very soon became reconciled to the stage when he saw that I made progress in the French language with incredible speed. Men are so constituted

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<sup>1</sup> By George Lillo, 1693-1739.

that every one would like to undertake himself what he has seen done by others, whether he has an aptitude for it or not. I had now gone through the whole repertoire of the French stage ; already many pieces came on for the second and third time, from the most serious tragedy to the most trivial afterpiece. All had passed before my eyes and mind ; and as when a child I had ventured to imitate Terence, so now as a boy, on a much more exciting occasion, I did not fail to repeat the French forms to the best of my ability and want of ability. At that time there were some half-mythological, half-allegorical pieces given in the taste of Piron ;<sup>1</sup> they were rather in the nature of parody, and were much liked. These performances especially attracted me : the little gold wings of a lively Mercury, the thunderbolt of the disguised Jupiter, an amorous Danaë, or by whatever name a fair one visited by the gods might be called, if indeed it were not a shepherdess or huntress to whom they descended. And as elements of this kind from Ovid's "Metamorphoses" and Pomey's "Pantheon Mythicum" <sup>2</sup> very frequently hummed about my head, I had soon composed in my imagination a small piece, of which I can only say this much that the scene was in the country and that there was no lack of king's daughters, princes, or gods. Mercury, particularly, made so vivid an impression on my senses that I could swear I had seen him with my eyes.

A copy, which I had made very neatly, I laid before my friend Derones, which he accepted with special grace and a truly patronising air, looked curiously through the manuscript, pointed out to me some verbal mistakes, found some of the speeches too long, and promised finally to consider and judge the work more closely when he had suitable leisure. To my modest question whether the piece by any chance could be performed, he assured me that it was not altogether impossible. In the theatre very much is a question of favour, and he would support me with all his heart, only one must keep the matter secret, for he had himself once astonished the directors with a piece which he had himself composed, and it would certainly have been performed if it had not been too soon discovered that he was

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<sup>1</sup> French poet, 1689-1773.

<sup>2</sup> Or "Fabulosa deorum historia," first appeared in Leyden, 1658.



the author. I promised him all possible silence, and already saw in my mind's eye the title of my piece posted up with large letters on all the street corners and squares.

Light-minded as my friend generally was, yet the opportunity of playing the part of master seemed all too desirable. He read the piece through with attention, and while he sat down with me to make some small alterations, in the course of conversation he turned the whole piece topsy-turvy, so that not one stone was left on another. He deleted, he added, took one character away, substituted another—in short, proceeded in the most madly arbitrary fashion in the world, so that my hair stood on end. My persuasion that he must understand the matter allowed him to go on, for he had often before told me of the three unities of Aristotle, of the regularity of the French drama, the probability, the harmony of the verse and all that belongs to these, that I was obliged to regard him not merely as informed, but thoroughly grounded. He abused the English and despised the Germans—in short, he laid before me the whole dramatical litany which I was destined to hear so often in my life.

Like the boy in the fable, I carried my mangled offspring home and endeavoured to bring it to life, but in vain. As, however, I did not want to give it up entirely, I had a clean copy made from my first manuscript by means of our clerk, after making a few alterations. This I handed to my father, and gained thereby this much that he allowed me to eat my evening meal in peace for some time after the theatre was over. This unsuccessful attempt made me reflective, and now I wanted immediately to get to learn those theories and laws to which every one appealed, but which for me had become suspicious through the incivility of my arrogant master. This was not, indeed, difficult, but laborious. I at once read Corneille's treatise on the three unities, and saw directly what was wanted, but why it was so wanted was by no means clear to me, and the worst of it was that I fell into still greater confusion, while I made myself acquainted with the disputes about the "Cid"<sup>1</sup> and read the prefaces in which Corneille and Racine were compelled to defend themselves against critics and the public. Here

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<sup>1</sup> The French Academy condemned the "Cid," partly in order to curry favour with Cardinal Richelieu.

I saw at least most clearly that no one knew what he wanted ; that a play like the " Cid," which had produced the noblest effects, should be called bad at the wish of an all-powerful cardinal ; that Racine, the idol of contemporary Frenchmen, who was also my hero (for I had got to know him more closely since Schöff von Olenschlager had had the " Britannicus " performed by us children, in which I took the part of Nero)—that Racine, I say, in his time could not come to terms with amateurs or critics. Through all this I became more confused than ever, and after I had tormented myself with the controversial talk, with the theoretical twaddle of the previous century, I rejected the good with the bad and threw away all the rubbish more decidedly from me, as I thought that the authors themselves, who had produced excellent things, when they began to speak about them, to set forth the grounds of their treatment, when they wished to defend, excuse, or justify themselves, did not always know how to hit the proper mark. I therefore hastened back again to the living present, visited the theatre still more keenly, read more conscientiously and uninterruptedly, so that I had at this time the perseverance to work through Racine, Molière, and a large part of Corneille. The King's Lieutenant still lived in our house. He had not changed his demeanour in anything, especially towards us ; but it was obvious that the interpreter knew how to make it still clearer to us that he no longer discharged his duties with cheerfulness nor with zeal, as at the beginning, though always with the same rectitude and loyalty. His character and behaviour, which proclaimed the Spaniard rather than the Frenchman ; his moods, which were not without their influence on his business ; his unbending character under all circumstances ; his irritability with regard to everything that touched his person and character—all this together might sometimes bring him into conflict with his superiors. To this result also contributed the fact that he had been wounded in a duel which had arisen in the theatre, and it was thought wrong that the King's Lieutenant, himself as chief of the police, should have committed a forbidden act. All this, as I have said, may have contributed to his living more retired and here and there perhaps acting with less energy.

Meanwhile a considerable part of the pictures he had

ordered had been delivered. Count Thorane spent his leisure hours in looking at them, while in the aforesaid gable room he had them nailed up in rows, large and small, and as there was want of space, even one over another, and then taken down and rolled up. The works were constantly examined anew, the parts that were thought the most successful ~~were~~ repeatedly enjoyed, but there was no lack of wishes that this or that had been differently done.

Here arose a new and quite peculiar operation. Since one painter was best at figures, another at the middle distances, a third at trees, the fourth at flowers, the Count wondered whether one could not unite these talents in the pictures and so bring forth the most perfect works. A beginning was at once made by having, for example, some beautiful cattle painted into a finished landscape. But because there was not always the suitable amount of space, and the animal painter was not particular about a couple of sheep more or less, the largest landscape in the end was too narrow. Now the painter of figures had to introduce the shepherds and some travellers; these again robbed one another of air, as it were, and we were astonished that they were not all suffocated even in the most open country. No one could foresee what would become of the matter, and when it was finished, it gave no satisfaction. The painters were annoyed. By their first orders they had made a profit, but by their later orders they lost, though the Count paid also for them very liberally. And as the parts worked into each other in one picture produced no good effect, in spite of all the trouble, at last each one imagined that his own work had been damaged and destroyed by that of the others, and so very little was wanting to make the artists fall out and get into a state of irreconcilable hostility. These alterations, or rather additions, were made in the aforesaid studio, where I remained quite alone with the artists, and it amused me to hunt out from the studies, particularly of animals, one or another individual or group and propose it for the foreground or background; in this respect they many times complied with my wishes either from conviction or kindness.

The partners in this affair were therefore very much discouraged, especially Seekatz, a very hypochondriacal, retired man, who, indeed, by his incomparably cheerful humour,

was the best of companions among friends, but when he worked, wished to work alone, in solitary reflection and perfectly free. This man, after solving difficult problems, finishing them with the greatest diligence and warmest affection, of which he was always capable, had to travel repeatedly from Darmstadt to Frankfort, either to alter something in his own pictures or to touch up those of others, or indeed under his supervision to allow his pictures to be worked up by some third person into a piece of motley patchwork. His ill-humour increased, his resistance became more decided, and it needed great exertion on our part to bend this family friend—for he also had become one—to the wishes of the Count. I still remember when the boxes were standing ready to pack up all the pictures in the order in which the paperhanger at their place of destination might fix them up at once, when only a small but indispensable retouching was required, Seekatz could not be moved to come over. He had indeed at parting done the best he could, having represented in paintings to be placed over the door the four elements as children and boys, after life ; and he had expended the greatest care not only on the figures but also on the accessories. These were delivered and paid for, and he thought that he was freed from the business for ever ; but now he was to come back again in order to enlarge by a few touches of the pencil some of the pictures, the size of which was too small. Another, he thought, could do it just as well ; he had already settled down to new work ; in short, he wouldn't come. The time for sending off the pictures was at hand ; they must have time to dry ; every delay was awkward. The Count, in despair, wanted to have him brought back by military force. We all wished to see the pictures finally gone, and found no other way out of the difficulty but for the friendly interpreter to seat himself in a carriage and fetch over the refractory artist with his wife and child. He was kindly received by the Count, well treated, and finally dismissed with liberal payment.

After the dispatch of the pictures there was great peace in the house. The gable room in the attic was cleaned and given over to me, and my father, when he saw the boxes sent off, could not refrain from the wish that the Count might be sent after them. For much as the taste of the Count agreed

with his own, much as my father must have rejoiced to see his principle of patronising living artists carried out so fruitfully by a man richer than himself, much as it may have flattered him that his collection had been the occasion of bringing so considerable a profit to a number of excellent artists in a difficult time, he nevertheless felt such a disinclination to the stranger who had intruded into his house that nothing could seem right to him in the conduct of that person. One ought to employ artists, but not degrade them to painters of wall-hangings ; one should be content with what they accomplished according to their conviction and capacity, even though it does not entirely please one, and not be always higgling and haggling. In short, in spite of the Count's generous endeavours, once for all, there could be no understanding. My father only visited that room when the Count was at table, and I remember only one occasion when Seekatz had surpassed himself and the desire of seeing these pictures had brought the whole house to the place, my father and the Count met and manifested a common pleasure in the works of art, which they could not find in one another.

Scarcely had the house been cleared of the chests and boxes when the plan for removing the Count, which had been begun, but had been interrupted, was resumed. An effort was made to gain over to their side justice by remonstrances, the sense of fairness by petition, favour by influence, and the quartermasters were prevailed upon to come to the point : that the Count was to change his lodgings, and that our house, in consideration of the burdens borne without intermission day and night for some years, should in future be exempted from billeting. But, in order that a plausible reason might be found for this, we were to take in lodgers on the first floor, which hitherto the King's Lieutenant had occupied, and so render a new billeting impossible. The Count, who after his separation from his beloved pictures felt no special interest in this house, and besides hoped to be recalled and promoted, consented to move without opposition to another good dwelling, and separated from us in peace and good will. Soon afterwards he left the city and received various posts step by step, yet, so we heard, not to his satisfaction. He had meantime the pleasure of seeing the pictures which he had preserved with so much care brought

without mishap into his brother's château ; he wrote sometimes, sent measurements, had various commissions executed subsequently by the more celebrated artists. At last we heard nothing further about him, except that after several years we were assured that he had died as governor of one of the French colonies in the West Indies.

## BOOK IV

GREAT as was the inconvenience which the billeting of the French had caused us, we had become so accustomed to it that we could not but miss it, and for us children the house seemed dead. Moreover, we were not destined to come again to complete family unity. New lodgers were already agreed upon, and after some sweeping and scouring, polishing and waxing, painting and varnishing, the house was completely restored again. The chancery-director Moritz, with his family, very worthy friends of my parents, moved in. He was not a born Frankforter, but an excellent lawyer and man of business, and managed the legal affairs of many small princes, counts, and noblemen. I have never seen him otherwise than cheerful and pleasant and diligent over his law papers. His wife and children, gentle, quiet, and benevolent, certainly did not increase the sociability of our house, for they kept to themselves; but a peace and quiet returned which we had not enjoyed for a long time. I now again occupied my attic room, where the ghosts of the many pictures at times floated before me, which I then through labour and study endeavoured to frighten away.

The Councillor of Legation—Moritz—a brother of the chancery-director, now came often into the house. He was indeed more a man of the world; he had a handsome figure and an easy, pleasant behaviour. He, too, managed the affairs of different persons of position, and often came into contact with my father on occasions of meetings of creditors and imperial commissions. They both had a high opinion of each other, and commonly stood on the side of the creditors, but to their annoyance they were obliged to learn generally that the majority of the delegates on such occasions were wont to be won over to the side of the debtors. The Councillor of Legation willingly communicated his knowledge, was fond of mathematics, and as they formed no part of his present walk in life, he made a pleasure in helping

me further in this branch of knowledge. And so I was put into the position of finishing my architectural sketches more accurately than hitherto, and of making better use of the instruction of a drawing master, who occupied us now every day for an hour.

This excellent old man was indeed only half an artist. We had to make strokes and combine them, out of which were to arise eyes and noses, lips and ears, nay, finally whole faces and heads, but there was no idea of natural or artistic form. For a long time we were tormented with this *quid pro quo* of the human figure, and we were thought to have advanced very far when we received the so-called "Passions" of Le Brun to copy. But even these caricatures did not forward us. Now we went off to landscapes, foliage, and to all the things which were practised in the ordinary teaching without consistency and without method. At last we dropped into exact imitation and neatness of strokes without troubling ourselves further about the merit of the original or its taste.

In these attempts my father led the way in an exemplary manner. He had never drawn, but wanted, now that his children pursued this art, not to be left behind, but to afford them an example, even at his age, of how they in their youth ought to proceed. He copied therefore several heads of Piazzetta<sup>1</sup> from his well-known sheets in small octavo with an English lead pencil on the finest Dutch paper. In these he observed not only the greatest clearness of outline but also imitated most accurately the hatching of the copperplate with a light hand—only too slightly, for in his desire to avoid hardness he brought no firmness into his sketches. Yet they were always soft and uniform. His persistent, untiring diligence went so far that he drew all the considerable collection number by number, while we children sprang from one head to another and only chose those which pleased us.

About this time the project of having us taught music, which had been long discussed, was carried out, and indeed the final impulse to this well deserves some mention. It was decided that we were to learn the harpsichord, but there had always been a dispute about the choice of the

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<sup>1</sup> A Venetian painter.



master. At last I came once accidentally into the room of one of my companions, who was just taking lessons on the harpsichord, and I found the teacher to be a most delightful man. For each finger of the right and left hand he had a nickname, with which he designated it in the most amusing manner when it had to be used. The black and white notes were likewise symbolically named; even the tunes themselves appeared under figurative titles. Such a motley company worked now quite pleasantly together. Fingering and time appeared to be quite easy and obvious, and while the scholar was put into the best humour, everything else went on splendidly.

Scarcely had I reached home when I urged upon my parents to be serious in the matter and to give us this incomparable man for our master on the harpsichord. They delayed for a time and made inquiries. Certainly they heard nothing bad about the teacher; at the same time, nothing particularly good. Meanwhile I had told my sister all the amusing names; we could hardly wait for the lesson, and succeeded in getting the man engaged.

The reading of the notes began first, and since with that no joke was forthcoming, we consoled ourselves with the hope that when we first got to the harpsichord and when we came to the fingers the jocular method would commence. But neither the keys nor the fingering appeared to afford opportunity for any symbol. Dry as were the notes with their strokes on and between the five lines, the black and white keys were so also, and not a syllable was heard of "thumbling," "pointerlings," or "goldfinger,"<sup>1</sup> while the face of the man moved as little at his dry teaching as it had done before at his dry jokes. My sister made me the bitterest reproaches because I had deceived her, and really believed that it had been all an invention of my own. But I was myself bewildered and learnt little although the man went properly to work, for, I was always expecting that the early jokes would make their appearance and consoled my sister from one day to another. But they kept away, and I should never have been able to explain this riddle if an accident had not revealed it to me.

One of my companions came in during the lesson, and

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<sup>1</sup> By this is meant the first, second, and fourth fingers.

at once all the pipes of the humorous fountain were opened ; the " thumbing " and " pointerlings," the " pickers " and " stealers," as he was wont to call the fingers, the " falings " and " galings," as he called the notes " f " and " g," the " fielings " and " gielings," as he called " f " and " g " sharp,<sup>1</sup> were once more *en évidence* and made the most wonderful mannikins. My young friend could not leave off laughing, and was delighted that one could learn so much in such an amusing way. He vowed that he would not leave his parents in peace till they had given him such an excellent man for a teacher.

And so, according to the principles of a modern educational theory, the way to two arts was early enough opened to me, merely by good luck, without any conviction that I should be further advanced therein by an inborn talent. My father maintained that every one should learn drawing, and therefore held in honour the Emperor Maximilian especially, by whom this had been expressly ordained. Accordingly, he kept me to it more steadily than to music, which he particularly enjoined upon my sister, and even out of her lesson hours held her closely to the harpsichord for a considerable part of the day.

But the more I was made to press on in this way, the more I wished of myself to press forward, and even my leisure hours were devoted to all sorts of strange occupations. From my earliest years I felt a love for the investigation of natural objects. It is often considered an instinct of cruelty in children that they end by pulling to pieces, tearing, and breaking up objects with which they have played for a long time and which they have handled in various ways. Yet even here is shown curiosity, the desire of learning how such things are put together, how they look from the inside. I remember that as a child I pulled flowers to pieces in order to see how the leaves were inserted in the calyx, or even plucked birds to see how the feathers were inserted into the wings. Children should not be blamed for this, since even naturalists think they teach themselves more by separating and dividing than by uniting and combining—more by killing than by making alive. An armed loadstone very

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<sup>1</sup> The names of the sharp notes in German terminate in "is"; hence "f" and "g" sharp are called "fis" and "gis."

neatly sewed up in scarlet cloth was one day to experience the effect of such love of inquiry. For this secret power of attraction, which is exercised not only on the little iron bar fitted to it, but was of such a kind that it could strengthen itself and every day draw a greater weight, this mysterious virtue had so excited my admiration that for a long time I was pleased by merely staring at its operation. But at last I thought that I might arrive at some nearer revelation if I took away the outer covering. This happened without my becoming wiser in consequence, for the naked iron taught me nothing further. Then also I took down and held in my hands the mere stone, with which I was never tired of making experiments of various kinds by means of filings and needles, from which, however, my youthful spirit drew no further advantage beyond a varied experience. I could not reconstruct the whole arrangement ; the parts were scattered, and I lost the remarkable phenomenon along with the apparatus.

Nor was I more fortunate in putting together an electrical machine. A friend of the family, whose youth had fallen in an epoch when electricity occupied all minds, often told us how he as a boy had wished to possess such a machine, how he had got together the principal requisites and, with the help of an old spinning-wheel and some medicine glasses, had produced tolerable results. As he readily and frequently repeated this story and above all instructed us in electricity, we children found the thing very plausible, and for a long time tormented ourselves with an old spinning-wheel and some medicine glasses, without being able to produce even the smallest result. Nevertheless, we held firm to our belief, and were much pleased when at the time of the fair, among other rarities, magic and conjuring tricks, an electrical machine also performed its marvels, which, like those of magnetism, were at that time already very numerous.

The mistrust of public instruction was increasing day by day. People looked about for private tutors, and as some families could not afford the expense, several of them came together so as to arrive at their object. But the children seldom got on together ; the young man hadn't sufficient authority, and after often-repeated vexations there were only angry partings. It is not therefore surprising that other arrangements were thought of which might be more permanent and also more advantageous.

The idea of establishing boarding schools arose from the necessity which every one felt of having the French language taught and communicated orally. My father had brought up a young man who had been with him as footman, valet, secretary, and, in short, general factotum. This man, Pfeil by name, spoke French well, and understood it thoroughly. After he had married and his patrons had to think of a situation for him, it occurred to them that he might establish a *pension* which should develop gradually into a small school, in which everything necessary, and finally even Latin and Greek, were taught. The extensive connections of Frankfort caused young Frenchmen and Englishmen to be brought to the establishment in order to learn German and otherwise cultivate themselves. Pfeil, who was in the prime of life, of most wonderful energy and activity, superintended the whole in a most praiseworthy fashion ; and as he could never be busy enough, when he wanted music masters for his pupils, he flung himself into the study of music and worked with such zeal at playing the harpsichord that he, who had never touched a note before, could very soon play with perfect readiness and vigour. He appeared to have adopted the maxim of my father that nothing can encourage and stimulate young people so much as when one at a certain age declares oneself a scholar again, and at a time of life when one attains to new accomplishments with difficulty, one endeavours by zeal and perseverance to get the better of the younger, who are more favoured by nature. By this love of harpsichord-playing Pfeil was brought to the instruments themselves, and while he hoped to procure the best, he came into contact with Frederici of Gera, whose instruments were renowned far and wide. He took a number of them on commission, and had the great joy of seeing installed in his abode not only one grand piano but several, and of practising and being heard upon them. The vivacity of this man brought a great keenness for music into our house. My father remained on lasting good terms with him except for some disputed points. For us, too, a large piano of Frederici was procured, which I, keeping to my harpsichord, hardly touched, but which served for the greater torment of my sister, because she, in order to do due honour to the instrument, had daily to spend more time on her practising, while my father as overseer and Pfeil as a

model and encouraging friend stood alternately by her side.

A special hobby of my father caused us children a good deal of discomfort. This was the silk culture, of the advantage of which, when widely extended, he had a great idea. Some acquaintances in Hanau, where the worms were very carefully cultivated, offered him the immediate inducement. From them the eggs were sent to him at the right time, and as soon as the mulberry trees showed sufficient foliage, they had to be stripped, and the creatures, which were scarcely visible, were tended with the greatest care. In an attic room tables and stands with boards were set up to provide them with more room and sustenance, for they grew quickly, and after the last casting of the skin became so greedy that scarcely enough leaves could be got to feed them—in fact, they had to be fed day and night, for everything turned on the food not failing at the time when the great and wondrous change was to come to pass in them. If the weather was favourable, this business could be looked upon as an amusing entertainment, but if it turned cold, so that the mulberry trees suffered, there was great trouble. But it was still more unpleasant if rain fell in the last period, for these creatures cannot endure moisture at all, and so the wetted leaves had to be carefully wiped and dried, which could not always be done so precisely; and for this or perhaps some other cause many kinds of illnesses came upon the swarm, so that the poor creatures were carried off in thousands. The putrefaction arising from this produced a truly pestilential smell, and since one had to carry away those that were dead and sick, and separate them from the living only to save some, the affair was indeed most burdensome and nauseous, and caused us children many an unpleasant hour.

After we had spent the finest weeks of spring and summer in attendance on the silkworms, we had to assist our father in another occupation, which, though simpler, was not less troublesome. The Roman views, which, bound with black rods at the top and bottom, had hung in the old house for several years on the walls, had become by light, dust, and smoke very yellow and, through the flies, not a little unsightly. If such uncleanness was not to be tolerated in the new house, yet these pictures had even gained in value for my father in consequence of his longer absence from the places repre-

sented. For at the outset such copies serve to refresh and enliven the impressions we have received a short time before. They seem trifling in comparison, and at best only a poor substitute. But as the remembrance of the originals fades more and more, the copies imperceptibly take their place. They become to us as dear as those once were, and what we once despised are now given our esteem and affection. Thus it is with all copies, especially with portraits. No one is easily content with the copy of an object which is still present, but how we value every silhouette of one who is absent or perhaps dead !

In short, with the feeling of his former extravagance,<sup>1</sup> my father wished to see these engravings restored as much as possible. It was well known that this could be done by bleaching, and this operation, always serious in the case of large plates, was undertaken under somewhat unfavourable local conditions. For the great boards on which the smoked engravings were moistened and exposed to the sun stood before the attic windows in the gutters, leaning against the roof, and were therefore exposed to many accidents. The chief point was that the paper should never dry, but always be left moist. My sister and I had this duty ; and the idleness which was otherwise so desirable became the greatest torment on account of the tedium and impatience and attention which admitted of no distraction. The thing was at last put through, and the bookbinder, who fixed every sheet on strong paper, did his best to match and restore the margins, which had been torn here and there by our negligence. All the plates were put together in one volume and were for this time preserved.

In order that we children should not be lacking in every variety of life and learning, about this time a teacher of the English language was announced, who promised to teach anyone English in four weeks who was not quite raw in the matter of language, and to advance him so far that with some diligence he could help himself further. His charges were moderate ; the number of pupils at one lesson was a matter of indifference to him. My father determined at once to make the attempt, and took lessons with me and my sister from this expeditious master. The hours were

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<sup>1</sup> Because he had neglected them, and so they had become damaged.

faithfully kept ; there was no lack of repetition ; other lessons rather than these were allowed to stand over during the four weeks ; the teacher parted from us and we from him with satisfaction. As he stayed longer in the town and found many employers, he came from time to time to look after us and help us, grateful that we were among the first who had had confidence in him and proud to be able to cite us as examples to the others.

In consequence of this, my father was occupied by a new care—namely, that English might stand neatly in the series of my other studies in language. Now I must confess that it always became more troublesome for me to take the subject for my studies now from this grammar or collection of examples, now from that, now from one author, now from another, and then every hour to dissipate my interest in the subjects. I therefore came upon the idea of doing it all at once, and invented a novel of six or seven brothers and sisters, who, separated from one another and scattered over the world, alternately communicated news to one another of their circumstances and feelings. The eldest brother gives in good German an account of all kinds of circumstances and events in his journey. The sister, in a feminine style, with nothing but stops and short sentences, much as “*Siegwart*” was afterwards written,<sup>1</sup> answers now him, now the other brothers and sisters, partly about domestic matters, partly about the condition of her heart. One brother studies theology and writes a very formal Latin, to which he oftens adds a postscript in Greek. To another brother appointed to the position of commercial clerk in Hamburg the correspondence in English naturally falls, as does French to a younger one who lived in Marseilles. For Italian there was a musician on his first trip into the world ; while the youngest of all, a kind of pert nestling, since he was cut off from the other languages, applied himself to Yiddish and by his terrible ciphers brought the others to despair and my parents to laughter over the good idea.

To fill up this singular form I looked out for some matter, while I studied the geography of the countries where my creations resided, and for these dry localities I invented all sorts of human incidents, which had some relationship

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<sup>1</sup> A novel by Miller, 1777.

with the character of my heroes and their occupation. In this way my exercise books became more voluminous, my father was more contented, and I soon became aware of the acquirements and the sort of readiness in which I was lacking.

As now such things when they are once started have no end or limit, so was it here ; for while I tried to adopt the quaint Yiddish and to write it as well as I could read it, I soon found that I wanted a knowledge of Hebrew, from which alone the modern corrupted and distorted dialect could be derived and handled with any certainty. I therefore explained to my father the necessity of learning Hebrew, and very keenly besought his consent, for I had a higher end in view. Everywhere I heard it said that for the comprehension of the Old Testament as well as for the New, the fundamental languages were necessary. The latter I read quite easily, because, that there should be no lack of occupation even on Sundays, the so-called Gospels and Epistles had after church to be recited, translated, and in some measure explained. I now thought of doing the same thing with the Old Testament, which, on account of its peculiarity, had always especially interested me. My father, who did not like to do anything by halves, decided to get the Rector of our Gymnasium—Doctor Albrecht—for private lessons, which he was to give me every week until I had grasped what was necessary of so simple a language, for he hoped it could be finished, if not so quickly, yet at least in double the time occupied by English.

Rector Albrecht was one of the most original figures in the world, small, not fat, but broad, misshapen, without being deformed—in short, an *Æsop* with gown and wig. His face, more than seventy years old, was twisted into a sarcastic smile, while his eyes remained large and, though red, were always brilliant and intelligent. He lived in the old cloister of the Barefoot Friars, the seat of the Gymnasium. Already, as a child, in company with my parents I had often visited him, and with a trembling delight glided through the long dark passages, the chapels transformed into reception rooms, the place broken up and full of stairs and corners. Without annoying me, he questioned me whenever he saw me, praised and encouraged me. One day, on the changing of the pupils' places after a public examination, he saw me



standing, as an outside spectator, while he distributed the silver *præmia virtutis et diligentiae*. I may have gazed very eagerly at the little bag from which he drew out the medals ; he nodded to me, descended a step, and handed to me one of the silver pieces. My delight was great, though others found this gift bestowed on one who was not in the school entirely out of order. But the good old man cared little about that ; he had always played the eccentric, and indeed in a striking manner. He had a very good reputation as a schoolmaster, and understood his business, although age no longer permitted him to practise it thoroughly. But now he was hindered by outward circumstances more than by his own infirmities, and, as I already knew, he was satisfied neither with the consistory, the inspectors, the clergy, nor the teachers. Both in his programme and public speeches he gave free play to his natural temperament, which inclined him to look out for the faults and defects of others, and as Lucian was almost the only author whom he read and valued, he spiced all that he read and wrote with corrosive ingredients.

Fortunately for those with whom he was dissatisfied, he never went to work directly, but only mocked at the defects which he wanted to reprove with hints, allusions, classical passages, and Biblical texts. Furthermore his delivery—he always read his addresses—was unpleasant, unintelligible, and, beyond all this, sometimes interrupted by a cough and often by a hollow, side-splitting laugh with which he was wont to accompany the sarcastic passages. This peculiar man I found gentle and obliging when I began to take lessons with him. I now went to him every evening at six o'clock, and always felt a secret pleasure when the outer door closed behind me and I had to wander through the long dark cloister passage. We sat in his library at a table covered with oilcloth ; a much-read Lucian never quitted his side.

In spite of all my willingness, I did not get at the matter without paying my way, for my teacher could not suppress certain scornful remarks as to the real truth about Hebrew. I concealed from him my design about Yiddish, and spoke about the better understanding of the original text. At that he laughed, and intimated that I should be satisfied if I only learnt to read. I was secretly annoyed by this, and con-

centrated all my attention when we came to the letters. I found an alphabet, which was something like the Greek, of which the forms were easy and the names, for the most part, not unfamiliar to me. All this I had soon grasped and retained, and thought we must now come to reading. That this went from right to left, I was well aware. But now all at once a new army of little letters and signs appeared, of dots and strokes of all kinds, which in fact represented the vowels ; at this I was all the more surprised, since in the larger alphabet there were manifestly vowels, and the others only seemed to be hidden under strange appellations. It was also taught that the Jewish nation so long as it flourished really contented itself with these first signs and knew no other kind of writing and reading. I would willingly have gone along this old-fashioned and, as it seemed to me, easier way, but the old man declared somewhat severely that one must proceed by the grammar as it had been approved and composed. Reading without these points and strokes, he said, was a very difficult task, and could be accomplished only by the learned and those who were well practised. Therefore I had to adjust myself to learning these little characters, but the matter became for me more and more confused. Now some of the first and larger primitive letters had no value in their places so that their little after-born kindred might not stand there in vain. Now they indicated a soft breathing, then a more or less hard guttural, and now they served only as supports and a buttress. But at last, when one thought that one had noted everything well, some of these personages, both great and small, were rendered inoperative, so that the eye had always very much and the lips very little to do.

As that of which I already knew the contents had to be stuttered out in a strange gibberish in which a certain snuffling and gurgling were recommended as something unattainable, so in some degree I broke away from the matter and amused myself in a childish way with the strange names of these accumulated signs. These were "emperors," "kings," and "dukes,"<sup>1</sup> which as accents, governing here and there, entertained me not a little. But even these

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<sup>1</sup> These are the technical names for classes of accents in the Hebrew grammar.

shallow jests soon lost their charm. Nevertheless, I was indemnified, as by reading, translating, repeating, and learning by heart, the contents of the book <sup>1</sup> came out more vividly, and it was this properly about which I wanted enlightenment from the old gentleman. Even before this the contradiction between tradition and what was real and possible had been for me very striking, and I had put my teacher in a great difficulty about the sun standing still in Gibeon and the moon in the valley of Ajalon,<sup>2</sup> not to mention certain other improbabilities and incongruities. All such things were now awakened, while I, in order to become master of Hebrew, occupied myself exclusively with and thoroughly studied the Old Testament, and that no longer in Luther's translation, but in the literal version of Sebastian Schmid,<sup>3</sup> printed under the text which my father had procured for me. Unfortunately, here our lessons began to be defective as regards the practice in speaking. Reading, interpreting, transcribing, and repetition of words lasted seldom a full half-hour, for I at once began to aim at the meaning of the matter, and, though we were still engaged in the first book of Moses, to bring into conversation many things which the later books suggested to me. At first the good old man tried to lead me back from such digressions, but at last he seemed himself to be entertained. He could not suppress his characteristic cough and laugh, and although he was careful not to give me any information which might compromise himself, my persistence did not abate ; indeed, since I was more anxious to bring forward my doubts than to learn the solution of the same, I became more lively and bolder, since he seemed to justify me by his behaviour. Yet I could get nothing out of him, but ever and anon he would call out, with his side-splitting laugh : " Ah, mad fellow, mad boy ! "

Still my childish vivacity which examined the Bible on all sides may have seemed to him fairly serious and worthy of some assistance. He therefore directed me after a time to the large English Biblical work which stood in his library and in which the interpretation of the more difficult and

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<sup>1</sup> The Old Testament.

<sup>2</sup> Joshua x. 12-13.

<sup>3</sup> Professor in Strasburg, who made a Latin translation of most of the Bible.

important passages had been undertaken in a sensible and wise manner. The translation had obtained advantages over the original owing to the great labours of German theologians. The different opinions were cited, and at last a kind of reconciliation was attempted, by which the dignity of the book, the basis of religion, and the human understanding might in some degree coexist. As often as I towards the end of the lesson came out with the traditional questions and doubts, so often did he point to the bookshelves ; I fetched the volume, he let me read it, dipped into his Lucian, and when I made my remarks about the book, his customary laugh was the only answer which he gave to my cleverness. In the long summer days he let me sit as long as I could read, often alone ; but after a time he let me take home with me one volume after another.

A man may turn whither he pleases, may undertake anything whatever, but he will always come back to the way which Nature has once marked out for him. Thus it happened with me in the present case. The trouble about the language, about the contents of the Sacred Scriptures, ended at last in producing a livelier picture in my imagination of that beautiful and much praised region, its surroundings and neighbourhood, as well as its people and the events by which that little spot of earth has been rendered glorious for thousands of years.

This small country was to see the origin and growth of the human race ; thence have come to us the first and only accounts of primitive history, and such a place was to lie before our imagination at once so simple and comprehensible, as well as varied and adapted to the most wonderful migrations and settlements. Here between four well-known rivers there was separated out from the whole habitable earth an extremely delightful spot for youthful man. Here he was to develop his earliest capacities, here at the same time he was to meet the fate which was to befall all his posterity—namely, that of losing peace by striving after knowledge. Paradise was lost through folly, men multiplied and grew worse, and the Elohim, not accustomed to the evil ways of this race, became impatient and utterly destroyed it. Only a few were saved from the general deluge, and scarcely had this dreadful flood ceased than the well-known ancestral soil lay before the grateful eyes of the saved.

Two rivers out of the four—the Euphrates and Tigris—still flowed in their beds.<sup>1</sup> The name of the first remained ; the other seemed to be pointed out by its course.<sup>2</sup> More minute traces of Paradise were not to be looked for after so great a revolution. The renewed race of man went forth from hence a second time ; it found opportunity for feeding and occupying itself in all kinds of ways, but chiefly in gathering round it large herds of tame cattle and wandering with them in every direction.

This manner of life, as well as the increase of the families, soon compelled the people to separate from one another. They could not at once resolve to let their relations and friends go for ever ; they came upon the idea of building a high tower which should show them the way back from the far distance. But this attempt miscarried, like their first endeavour. They could not be at the same time happy and wise, numerous and united. The Elohim confounded them, the building was left unfinished, mankind were dispersed, the world was peopled, but divided.

Our eyes and our interest remain for ever fixed on these regions. But at last there goes forth from hence the founder of a race, and he is so fortunate as to stamp a distinct character on his descendants and thereby to unite them for all time into a great nation inseparable through all changes of place and destiny.

Abraham wandered forth westwards not without Divine guidance. The desert sets no decided obstacle to his passage ; he reaches the Jordan, passes over its waters, and spreads himself over the beautiful southern regions of Palestine. This land was already occupied and fairly well inhabited. Mountains, not too high, but strong and barren, were intersected by many well-watered valleys favourable to cultivation. Towns, villages, settlements, lay scattered on the plain and on the slopes of the great valley, whose waters are collected in the Jordan. The land was thus inhabited and cultivated, but the world was still large enough, and the men were not sufficiently careful, indigent, and active as to make themselves at once masters of all the surrounding territory.. Between their possessions great

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<sup>1</sup> Tigris is Persian for "arrow," so called from its straight course.

<sup>2</sup> The other two were Pison and Gihon.

spaces stretched out, in which grazing herds could freely move hither and thither. In such places Abraham halts, his brother <sup>1</sup> Lot with him, but they cannot remain long in such regions. Even the condition of the land, the population of which is now increasing and now diminishing, and the productions of which never keep in equilibrium with the requirements, gives rise unexpectedly to a famine, and the stranger suffers alike with the native, whose means of sustenance has been rendered difficult by his accidental presence. The two Chaldean brothers move to Egypt, and so there is traced out for us the theatre on which, for some thousands of years, the most important events in the world were to take place. From the Tigris to the Euphrates, from the Euphrates to the Nile, we see the earth inhabited, and in this space a well-known man, beloved by Heaven, who has already to us become worthy, travelling to and fro with his goods and herds and, in a short time, increasing them most abundantly. The brothers return, but, made wise by the distress they have endured, they decide to separate from one another. Both indeed settle in Southern Canaan, but while Abraham remains at Hebron, opposite the grove of Mamre, Lot moves to the valley of Siddim, which, if an imagination is bold enough to give to the Jordan a subterranean outlet, so that in place of the Dead Sea we shall have dry ground, can and must appear like a second Paradise ; and this seems all the more probable, because the residents and the original inhabitants of the same, notorious as voluptuaries and wicked people, cause us to infer that they led an easy and luxurious life. Lot dwells among them, but apart.

But Hebron and the grove of Mamre appear to us as the important place, when the Lord speaks with Abraham and promises him all the land as far as his eyes can reach in the four quarters of the world. From these quiet regions, from these shepherd tribes who can associate with celestials, entertain them as guests, and have many conversations with them, we are compelled to turn our eyes again to the East and to reflect upon the condition of the neighbouring country, which on the whole was like that of Canaan. Families keep together, they become united, and the manner of life of the tribes is determined by the locality which they

<sup>1</sup> Here used in the sense of near relation.

have appropriated or appropriate. On the mountains which send down their waters to the Tigris we find warlike people, who already thus early foreshadowed those world conquerors and world rulers—and in a campaign, prodigious for those times, give us a prelude of future mighty achievements. Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, has already a mighty influence over his allies. He reigns a long while, for already twelve years before the arrival of Abraham in Canaan he had made the nations tributary as far as the Jordan. They revolted at last, and the allies armed themselves for war. We find them unexpectedly on a route by which probably Abraham also came to Canaan. The nations on the left and lower side of the Jordan were subdued. Chedorlaomer directs his march southwards to the peoples of the wilderness, then turning northwards smites the Amalekites, and when he has also overcome the Amorites he arrives in Canaan, overpowers the kings of the valley of Siddim, smites and scatters them, and with a large amount of booty marches up the Jordan, in order to extend his victorious march as far as Lebanon.

Among the captives, despoiled and dragged along with their belongings, is Lot, who shares the fate of the land in which he lives as a guest. Abraham learns this, and here at once we see the patriarch as warrior and hero. He gathers his servants together, divides them into troops, falls upon the baggage and booty, confounds the victors, who could not expect any further enemy in their rear, and brings back his brother and his property together with much more belonging to the conquered kings. By this short campaign Abraham at once takes possession of the land. To the inhabitants he appears as a protector, a saviour, and, by his disinterestedness, a king. The kings of the valley receive him with thankfulness—Melchisedec, the king and priest, giving a blessing. Now were the prophecies renewed of an unending posterity ; indeed, they go even further. From the River Euphrates to the Waters of Egypt all the land was promised to him, yet there is a bad look out for his immediate heirs. He is eighty years of age and has no son. Sara, less trustful of the heavenly powers than he, becomes impatient ; she desires, according to the oriental custom, to have an heir by means of her maid. But Hagar has scarcely become united with the head of the household,

scarcely is there hope of a son, when a quarrel arises in the home. The wife treats her dependent badly enough, and Hagar flees in order to find a better condition with other tribes. Not without intimation from on high, she turns back, and Ishmael is born.

Abraham is now ninety-nine years old and the prophecies of a numerous posterity are always repeated, so that in the end both parents find them ridiculous ; and yet at last Sara is pregnant and brings forth a son, to whom the name of Isaac is given.

History rests for the most part on the legitimate propagation of the human race. The most important events of the world must be traced in the secrets of families, and so the marriages of the patriarchs give us cause for special consideration. It is as though the Divinity, which loves to direct the fate of man, had wished to represent here as in a figure connubial events of every kind. Abraham, living so long in a childless marriage with a beautiful wife, who had been wooed by many, finds himself in his hundredth year the husband of two women and the father of two sons, and at this moment his domestic peace is disturbed. Two women near one another and two sons by different mothers cannot possibly get on together. The party which by law, tradition, and opinion is less favoured must give way. Abraham must sacrifice his longing for Hagar and Ishmael. Both are dismissed, and Hagar is compelled now, against her will, to go upon a road which she once took on a voluntary flight, as it seems, to the destruction of her child and herself ; but the angel of the Lord, who had turned her back on an earlier occasion, saves her also this time, so that Ishmael, too, becomes a great nation, and the most improbable of all prophecies passes all bounds and comes to fulfilment.

Two parents advanced in years and an only late-born son—here one might at least expect domestic peace and earthly good fortune. Not in the least. The heavenly powers prepare for the patriarch yet the hardest trial. Of this, however, we cannot speak without setting forth many considerations. If a universal religion should arise and from it a special and revealed one be developed, the countries in which our imagination has hitherto dwelt, the mode of life, and the race of men were most fitted for the purpose. At least we do not find in the whole world anything equally favour-



able and encouraging. Even to natural religion, if we assume that it has arisen earlier in the human mind, there belongs much delicacy of feeling, for it rests upon the conviction of a universal providence, which directs the order of the world in its entirety. A special religion revealed by Heaven to this or that people carries with it the belief in a special Providence which the Divine Being grants to favoured men, families, races, and people. This faith seems to develop itself with difficulty from the inner nature of man. It requires tradition, usage, and the warrant of a primitive time. Beautiful is it, therefore, that the Israelitish tradition represents the first men who trust to this particular Providence as heroes of the faith, following all and every command of that lofty Being on whom they recognise themselves to be dependent, just as blindly as they, undisturbed by doubts, are unwearied in waiting the later fulfilment of His prophecies.

As a particular revealed religion is based on the idea that one man can be more favoured by Heaven than another, so it also arises pre-eminently from the separation of classes. Primitive men appeared to be more closely allied, but their occupations soon separated them. The hunter was the freest of all ; from him develop the warrior and the ruler. Those who cultivated the land bound themselves to the soil, erected dwellings and barns so as to preserve what they had gained, and could think rather highly of themselves because their condition promised permanence and security. The herdsman in his position seemed to have acquired conditions that knew no bounds and limitless property. The increase of the herds was infinite, and the space in which they could be fed widened in all directions. These three classes seem at once from the beginning to have regarded each other with dislike and contempt, and as the herdsman was an abomination to the townsman, he soon separated from him. The hunters are lost to our eyes in the mountains, and only come before us again as conquerors.

The patriarchs belonged to the shepherd class. Their mode of life upon the ocean of deserts and pastures gave breadth and freedom to their thoughts ; the vault of heaven, beneath which they lived, with all its nightly stars, gave nobility to their feelings ; and they felt the need, more than the active, skilful hunter or the secure, careful housekeeping

husbandman, of the unshakable faith that a God was at their side, that He sought them, took an interest in them, led them, and preserved them.

In passing to the rest of the history we are compelled to make another reflection. Humane, beautiful, and cheerful as the religion of the patriarchs seems, yet through it go features of savagery and cruelty out of which mankind can emerge, or into which it can again sink.

That hatred should be reconciled by the blood, by the death, of the conquered enemy is natural ; that men should conclude a peace on the battle-field between rows of the slain is easily understood ; that they should believe they are confirming an agreement by slaughtered animals follows from the preceding, also that one could bring over, reconcile, and win by means of slain creatures the gods, who are always looked upon as partisans, adversaries, or allies ; over such a conception one cannot be surprised. But if we confine our attention to the sacrifices and regard the way in which they were offered in those primitive times, we find a curious usage, which to us is quite repellent, and was probably derived from war, namely, this : that the sacrificed animals of every kind, and whatever number were to be devoted to the gods, had to be hewn in two halves, laid out on two sides, and in the space between were those who wished to make a covenant with the Deity. Yet another dreadful trait full of marvel and foreboding goes through that beautiful world—namely, that everything which has been consecrated or vowed to God must die ; probably this, too, is a usage of war transferred to peace. The inhabitants of a city who vigorously defend themselves are threatened with such a vow ; the city is taken by storm or otherwise ; nothing is left alive—men certainly not, often women, children, and even cattle share a like fate. Such sacrifices rashly and superstitiously with more or less certainty are promised to the gods, and so those whom one would willingly spare, one's nearest of kin, one's own children, have to bleed as sin-offerings for such a delusion.

In the gentle, truly patriarchal character of Abraham such a barbarous mode of worship could not arise, but the gods, who often, in order to tempt us, appear to call out these qualities which mankind is falsely inclined to impute to them, issue the most terrible commands to him. He must

sacrifice his son as a pledge of the new covenant, and, if he follows what is customary, must not only kill and burn him, but divide him into two pieces, and between the smoking entrails await for himself a new promise from the benignant deity. Without hesitation, and blindly, Abraham prepares to fulfil the command ; for Heaven the will is sufficient. Now are Abraham's trials over, for they could not go any further. But Sara dies ; this gives Abraham an opportunity of taking typical possession of the land of Canaan. He has need of a grove, and this is the first time that he looks out for a possession on this earth. He had before this sought out a twofold cave opposite the grove of Mamre. This he purchases with the adjacent field, and the form of law which he observes on the occasion shows how important the possession is to him. It was more so perhaps than he supposed, for there he, his sons and grandsons were to rest, and by this means the nearest title to the whole land, as well as the everlasting desire of his posterity to gather themselves there, was most properly based.

Henceforth the manifold incidents of the family life become varied. Abraham always holds himself strictly apart from the inhabitants, and though Ishmael, the son of an Egyptian woman, has also married a daughter of that land, Isaac is obliged to marry a kinswoman of equal birth with himself.

Abraham sends his servant to Mesopotamia, to the relatives whom he had left there. The prudent Eleazar arrives incognito, and, in order to bring home the right bride, makes trial of the readiness to serve of the maidens at the well. He asks to drink himself, and Rebecca, unasked, waters his camels also. He gives her presents, demands her in marriage, and she does not reject his suit. And so he brings her to the home of his master and she is married to Isaac. In this case, too, the issue has to be awaited for a long time. Not till after some years of probation is Rebecca blessed, and the same strife which arose in the case of Abraham's double marriage between the two mothers here proceeds from one. Two boys of opposite nature wrestle in their mother's womb. They are born, the elder lively and powerful, the younger gentle and prudent ; the former is the father's, the latter the mother's, favourite. The strife for precedence, which begins at birth, continues

always. Esau is quiet and indifferent about the birthright which fate has assigned to him ; Jacob does not forget that his brother forced him back. Watchful for every opportunity of gaining the wished-for privilege, he buys the birthright of his brother and overreaches him in regard to his father's blessing. Esau is furious, and vows his brother's death ; Jacob flees to seek his fortune in the land of his forefathers.

Now for the first time in so noble a family there arises a member who has no hesitation in obtaining by prudence and cunning the advantages which nature and circumstances have denied to him. It has often been remarked and declared that the Sacred Scriptures by no means intend to represent to us the patriarchs and other men favoured by God as models of virtue. They are men of the most different characters, with all kinds of faults and weaknesses, but one principal trait is not lacking to these men after God's own heart—that is, they have an unshakable faith that God specially takes note of them and their belongings.

Universal, natural religion, properly speaking, indeed requires no faith ; for the conviction that a mighty, creative, regulating, and guiding Being conceals Himself, as it were, behind Nature, in order to make Himself comprehensible to us—such a conviction forces itself upon every one. Nay, even if we sometimes let go the thread which guides us through life, yet it can at once and always be taken up again. It is quite different with a special religion, which announces to us that that mighty Being distinctly and especially takes notice of one individual, one race, one nation, one country. This religion is based upon faith, which must be unshakable, if it is not at once to be fundamentally destroyed. Every doubt of such a religion is fatal to it. One may return to the conviction, but not to the faith. Hence the endless probations, the delay in the fulfilment of so often repeated promises, by which the capacity for faith of those ancestors is set in the clearest light.

It is in this faith, too, that Jacob enters upon his expedition, and, though he has not gained our sympathy by his cunning and deceit, yet he wins it by his lasting and invincible love for Rachel, whom he himself woos without preparation, as Eleazar had courted Rebecca for his father. In him the promise of a countless people was to be first completely unfolded ; he was to see around him many sons, but also

through them and their mothers to experience much anguish of heart.

Seven years he serves for his beloved, without impatience and without wavering. His father-in-law, like him in cunning, and disposed, like him, to regard all means as justified by the end, deceives him and repays him for what he has done to his brother. Jacob finds in his arms a wife whom he does not love. Doubtless Laban, in order to appease him, gives him after a time the beloved one as well, but on the condition of another seven years' service, and so arises vexation after vexation. The wife whom he does not love is fruitful, but the loved one has no children. She, like Sara, wishes to become a mother by means of her handmaiden; Leah grudges her even this advantage. She, too, brings her handmaiden to her husband, and now the excellent patriarch is the most troubled man in the world—four wives, children from three of them, and none from his beloved. At last she, too, is favoured, and Joseph comes into the world, the late fruit of their passionate love. Jacob's fourteen years are over, but Laban will not dispense with his chief and most trusty servant. They conclude fresh compacts and divide the flocks between them. Laban keeps those of white colour as being the most numerous; Jacob has to be contented with the spotted ones as the refuse. But here, too, he knows how to keep his advantage, and just as by a wretched mess of pottage and by a disguise he had won his father's blessing, so now by art and sympathy he understands how to appropriate to himself the largest part of the herds; and on their side also he becomes the truly worthy progenitor of the people of Israel and a pattern for his descendants. Laban and his household take notice if not of the trick, at least of its results. Vexation follows; Jacob flees with all his family and property, escapes Laban's pursuit of him partly by good luck, partly by cunning. Now Rachel is to present him with a son, but she dies at his birth; the son of her sorrow, Benjamin, survives her, but still greater sorrow is the aged father to experience from the apparent loss of his son Joseph.

It may perhaps be asked why I have again brought forward in detail these universally known stories which have been so often repeated and explained. Let this answer satisfy the inquirer, that in no other way could I represent

how I concentrated my mind and feelings on one point in quiet action amid my distracted life and desultory study ; for in no other fashion could I describe the peace which surrounded me, when all about me outside was so wild and strange. If an ever-active imagination, of which that fairy tale may be a witness, led me hither and thither, if the mixture of fable and history, mythology and religion, threatened to bewilder me, willingly did I take refuge in those regions of the East, plunged myself into the first books of Moses, and amid the scattered shepherd tribes found myself at once in the greatest solitude and the greatest society.

These family scenes, before they were to lose themselves in a history of the Jewish nation, show us in conclusion a figure by which the hopes and fancies of the young in particular are agreeably excited—Joseph, the child of the most passionate wedded love. He appears before us tranquil and serene, and prophesies to himself the advantages which will elevate him above his family. Cast into misfortune by his brethren, he remains steadfast and honest in his captivity, withstands the most dangerous temptations, saves himself by his prophecies, and for his merits is raised to the highest honour. First he shows himself helpful and useful to a great kingdom and then to his brethren. He resembles his great ancestor, Abraham, in his repose and majesty, his grandfather, Isaac, in silence and humility. The talent for traffic inherited from his father he exercises on a great scale. It is no longer a case of flocks which he wins for his father-in-law or himself, but peoples with all their possessions which he understands how to manage for a king. Exceedingly charming is the natural story, only it seemed too short, and one feels called upon to paint it in detail.

Such a picture of Biblical characters and events only sketched in outline was not unfamiliar to the Germans. To the personalities of the Old and New Testaments had by means of Klopstock been given a tender and affectionate nature, which greatly pleased the boy as well as many of his contemporaries. Of Bodmer's <sup>1</sup> works of this kind little or nothing came to him ; but "Daniel in the Lions' Den," by Moser, made a great impression on his young mind.

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<sup>1</sup> The Swiss poet, 1698-1763.

In that work a right-minded man of business and caution attains through manifold tribulations high honours, and his piety, for which they threatened to destroy him, became early and late his shield and buckler. It had long seemed to me desirable to work out the history of Joseph, but I could not get on with the form, especially as no kind of versification came easily to me, which would have been suitable for such a work. But now I found a treatment of it in prose, which was most suitable, and I set myself to the execution of it with all my strength. I now sought to discriminate and depict the characters, and by the interpolation of incidents and episodes to make the old simple history into a new and independent work. I did not consider what indeed youth cannot consider—that subject-matter was necessary for such a purpose, and this can only arise for us by the perceptions of experience. In short, I represented to myself every incident down to the minutest detail, and narrated them to myself in their succession with the greatest exactitude.

My labour was made lighter owing to a circumstance which threatened to make this work and my authorship generally very voluminous. A young man of many capacities, but who from overwork and conceit had become imbecile, lived as a ward in my father's house. He lived quietly with the family and was very silent and reserved, but if allowed to go his own way, was contented and agreeable. He had written his academic copy books with great care, and acquired a flowing, legible hand. He liked to occupy himself with writing, and was pleased when anyone gave him something to copy, but still more if one dictated to him, for he then felt carried back to his happy years of university life. Nothing to my father could be more desirable, as he did not write an expeditious hand and his German letter-writing was small and shaky. He was therefore accustomed, in the conduct of his own and other people's business, to dictate to this young man usually for some hours in the day. I found it no less convenient in the interval to see everything which flitted through my brain fixed on paper by a strange hand, and my natural gift of invention and imitation increased with the power of setting it down and preserving it. As yet I had not undertaken a work so large as that Biblical prose-epic. The times were fairly quiet, and nothing called

my imagination back from Palestine and Egypt. So my manuscript swelled every day all the more, as the poem, which I recited to myself, as it were, in the air, stood here and there on the paper, and only a few pages required to be rewritten from time to time.

When the work was finished—for to my astonishment it really did come to an end—I bethought me that from former years there were many poems in existence which did not seem to me bad, and which, when written in the same size with Joseph, would make quite a neat quarto, to which one could give the title of “Miscellaneous Poems,” which pleased me a good deal, as it gave me an opportunity for quietly imitating well-known and celebrated authors. I had completed a good number of so-called Anacreontic poems, which flowed forth readily enough on account of the convenience of the metre and the easiness of the subject. But these I could not well take, as they were not in rhyme, and beyond everything I wanted to show something to my father which would please him. All the more, therefore, did the spiritual odes seem suitable, which I had zealously attempted in imitation of Elias Schlegel’s “Last Judgment.” One of these, written in celebration of Christ’s descent into hell, received much applause from my parents and friends, and it had the good fortune to please me myself some years afterwards. I studied with diligence the so-called texts of the Sunday church music, which were always to be had printed. They were indeed very weak, and I could well believe that my verses, many of which I had completed in the prescribed fashion, just as well deserved to be set to music and performed for the edification of the congregation. These and many of the same kind I had for more than a year copied out with my own hand, because through this private exercise I was released from the instructions of the writing master. Now, all were corrected and put in good order, and it did not require much persuasion to see them neatly copied out by that young man who was so fond of writing. I hastened with them to the bookbinder, and when I soon handed the neat volume to my father, he encouraged me with especial pleasure to furnish a similar quarto every year, which he did all the more keenly because I had done it all in my so-called free hours.

There was yet another circumstance which increased my



disposition to these theological or rather Biblical studies. The senior of the ministry, John Philip Fresenius,<sup>1</sup> a mild man, of a handsome, pleasing appearance, who was honoured by his congregation, indeed by the whole town, as an exemplary clergyman and good preacher, but who, because he had come out against the Moravians, did not stand very well with the dissenting Pietists. On the other hand, he had made himself famous and almost sanctified by the multitude owing to his conversion of a free-thinking general who had been mortally wounded. This man died, and his successor, Plitt, a tall, handsome, dignified man, who, however, brought from his Chair (he had been a Professor in Marburg) the gift of teaching rather than of edifying, immediately announced a sort of religious course, to which he wished to devote his sermons in a certain methodical connection. I had already, when obliged to go to church, noticed the arrangement of the subject, and could now and then boast of a pretty complete recitation of a sermon. Since much was said about the new senior for and against in the congregation, and many would not put any trust in the didactic sermons which he had announced, I undertook to copy them out more carefully, and I succeeded all the better as I had already made smaller attempts in a seat very convenient for hearing, but otherwise concealed from sight. I was very attentive and on the alert ; at the moment when he said "Amen" I hurried out of the church and consumed a couple of hours in rapidly dictating what I had fixed on the paper and in my memory, so that I could hand over the written sermon before dinner. My father was very proud of this success, and the good friend of the family who had just come in to dinner also shared in the delight. Indeed, this man was very well disposed to me because I had so made his "Messiah" my own that, when I often went to get impressions of seals for my collection of armorial bearings, I could recite large passages from it so that tears stood in his eyes.

The next Sunday I continued the work with equal zeal, and because the mechanical part of the same mainly entertained me, I did not reflect upon what I wrote and preserved.

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<sup>1</sup> Described by Goethe as the "Court preacher" in the "Confessions of a Fair Saint" (*Wilhelm Meister*).

For the first quarter these efforts may have remained about the same, but when I at last in my self-conceit did not think I should find particular enlightenment as to the Bible or a clearer insight into Dogmas, it seemed to me that the slight vanity which was thus satisfied was too dearly purchased for me to pursue the matter with the same zeal. The sermon, which at first had so many pages, became more and more meagre, and I should have given up this labour altogether had not my father, who loved completeness, by kind words and promises induced me to keep on till the last Sunday in Trinity, though at the conclusion little more than the text, the statement, and the divisions were set down on little pieces of paper.

With regard to completeness, my father was particularly pertinacious. What had once been undertaken ought to be carried out, even though in the interval the inconvenience, boredom, vexatiousness, even indeed the uselessness of what had been begun was clearly manifest. It seemed as though he thought completion the only end, perseverance the only virtue. If in the long winter evenings we had begun to read a book aloud in the family circle, we were obliged to go through with it, though we were all in despair about it and he was the first to begin to yawn. I still remember such a winter when we had to work through Bower's "History of the Popes."<sup>1</sup> It was a terrible state of things, in which little or nothing which happened in ecclesiastical affairs could interest children and young people. Still, with all my inattention and repugnance, so much remained of that reading in my mind that I was able in after times to take up many threads of the history.

Amid all these heterogeneous occupations and labours, which followed so quickly one after another that one could hardly reflect whether they were permissible and useful, my father did not lose sight of his main object. He sought to turn my memory and gift for apprehending and composing things on to juridical subjects, and therefore gave me a small book by Hopp in the shape of a catechism and worked up into the form and contents of the Institutes. I soon learnt the questions and answers by heart, and could

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<sup>1</sup> A German translation of this work by a Scotsman appeared in ten volumes, 1751-80, embracing only the first centuries of the history of the Papacy.

represent as well the catechist as the catechumen ; and as in the religious instruction of that time one of the principal exercises was to look out in the Bible as quickly as possible, so was a like acquaintance with the " *Corpus Juris* " found necessary, and in this I was soon completely skilled. My father wished me to go further, and the little Struve was taken in hand ; but here things did not go so fast. The form of the book was not so favourable for the beginner, so that he could help himself on, nor was my father's way of teaching so broadminded as to interest me.

Not only owing to the warlike circumstances in which we lived some years ago, but also owing to the civil life itself and through the reading of histories and romances, it became all too clear to me that there were many cases in which the laws are silent and do not come to the help of the individual, who must then see how to get out of the difficulty by himself. We were now growing up, and according to the old routine we had among other things to learn to fence and ride, so as on occasion to defend our skins, and on horseback not to have a schoolboy-like appearance. As regards the first, such an exercise was very pleasant, for we had long known how to make broadswords out of hazel sticks, with basket hilts neatly woven of willow to protect the hand. Now we were to add real steel blades, and the clatter we made with these was most lively.

There were two fencing masters in the town—one an old more serious German, who went to work in severely solid style, and a Frenchman, who sought to gain his advantage by advancing and retreating, by light, fugitive strokes, which were always accompanied with some exclamations. Opinions were divided as to which was the best method. The Frenchman was given to the small society with which I took lessons, and we were soon accustomed to go forwards and backwards, to make passes and recover, and always to break out into the usual cries. But many of our acquaintance had betaken themselves to the German fencing master, and practised exactly the opposite method. These different ways of handling so important an exercise, the conviction of every one that his own master was the best, produced a veritable strife among the young people who were about the same age, and the fencing very nearly gave rise to serious battles, for there was nearly as much

fighting with words as with swords ; and at last, in order finally to settle the matter, a trial of skill was arranged between the two teachers, the consequences of which I need not describe in detail. The German maintained his position like a wall, watched his opportunity, and with his cut and thrust knew how to disarm his opponent over and over again. The latter asserted that this was not right, and continued by his agility to exhaust the wind of the other. He also brought several blows upon the German, which, however, if they had been in earnest, would have sent himself into the next world.

On the whole, nothing was decided or improved, only some, among whom I was one, betook themselves to their countryman. But I had already acquired too much from the first master, and so a considerable time went by before the new one could disaccustom me from it, and altogether he was less satisfied with us renegades than with his original pupils.

The riding I found still worse. As it chanced, I was sent in the autumn to the riding school, so that I made my beginning in the cool and damp season. The pedantic treatment of this beautiful art was highly distasteful to me. From first to last the whole talk was always about having a firm seat, and yet nobody could tell me in what the firm seat actually consisted, on which everything depended, for they went to and fro on horseback without stirrups. Besides, the teaching seemed contrived only for the purpose of cheating and mortifying the scholars. If one forgot to tighten or loosen the curb, if one dropped the whip, or even the hat, each carelessness, each misfortune, had to be paid with money, and also one was thoroughly laughed at as well. This put me into the very worst humour, especially as I found the place where we exercised quite intolerable. The nasty large space, either damp or dusty, the cold, and the mouldy smell, all was in the highest degree repugnant to me ; and since the riding-master always gave the others the best but me the worst horses to ride, because they bribed him by breakfasts or other gifts or by their own cleverness ; also he kept me waiting and, as it seemed, neglected me, so that I spent the most wretched hours over an occupation which ought to have been the most pleasant in the world. Indeed, the impression of that time and of those circumstances has

remained with me so vividly that, though I afterwards became a passionate and bold rider, even for days or weeks was hardly off horseback, I carefully avoided covered riding courses and at most only passed a few minutes in them. The case happens often enough that, when the elements of an unknown art have to be taught to us, this is done in a painful and terrifying manner. The conviction that this is tedious and injurious has in later times given rise to the educational maxim that everything should be brought to the young in an easy, cheerful, and pleasant way, from which, however, other evils and disadvantages have arisen.

With the approach of spring, everything became quieter with us, and as in earlier days I had sought to obtain a sight of the city, its ecclesiastical and civil, public and private buildings, and especially found the greatest delight in the still prevailing antiquities, I afterwards endeavoured, by means of Lersner's "Chronicle" and other Frankfortian books and pamphlets belonging to my father, to represent to myself the personalities of past times. This seemed to me to be well attained by means of great attention to the peculiarities of times and manners and of distinguished individuals.

Among the ancient remains, from my childhood onwards I had been greatly astounded by the skull of a State criminal, which had been fixed up on the tower of the bridge ; it, out of three or four, as the naked iron spikes showed, had been preserved through all the injuries of time and weather since 1616. As often as one returned from Sachsenhausen to Frankfort this tower was before one, and the skull was before one's eyes. As a boy the story of these rebels was told to me—Fettmilch and his companions—how they had been discontented with the government of the city, risen up against it, plotted a mutiny, plundered the Jewish quarters, and stirred up terrible riots, but were at last captured and condemned to death by the imperial delegates. Later on I was anxious to learn the most minute circumstances and to find out what sort of people they were. When I learned from an old book of the time, provided with woodcuts, that these men had certainly been condemned to death, but at the same time many of the town councillors had been deposed, because there had been much disorder, and very

much that was arbitrary was then going on ; when I learned the nearer particulars how all took place, I mourned over the unfortunate men, whom one might well look upon as sacrifices which had brought a better constitution in the future. For from that time was dated the regulation, according to which the noble old house of Limpurg, the Frauenstein house which had originated from a club, besides lawyers, tradespeople, and artisans were allowed to take part in the government, which, completed by a system of ballot, complicated in the Venetian fashion and restricted by the civil colleges, was called to do right without retaining special liberty to do wrong.

Among the things which aroused the forebodings of the boy and even of the youth was especially the Jewish quarter of the city, properly called the Jewish street, as it consisted of little more than one single street, which in earlier times may have been hemmed in between the walls and trenches of the town, as in a prison. The narrowness, the dust, the crowd, the accent of an unpleasing speech, altogether made a most disagreeable impression, if one only looked in on passing by the gate. It was a long time before I ventured in alone, and I did not readily return again when I had once escaped the importunities of so many men never tired of demanding money and offering to traffic. At the same time there hovered gloomily before my young spirit the old legends of the cruelty of the Jews to Christian children, which we had seen horribly depicted in Gottfried's chronicles. Although in modern times they were thought better of, the large caricatures,<sup>1</sup> still to be seen to their disgrace on an arched wall under the bridge tower, still bore witness against them extraordinarily, for it had been made, not through private ill-will, but by public order.

Meanwhile they, nevertheless, remained the chosen people of God, and passed, however it came about, as a memorial of the most ancient times. Besides, as men they were active and affable, and one could not deny respect to the tenacity with which they clung to their customs. Furthermore, the girls were pretty, and were quite pleased if a Christian lad showed himself friendly and attentive to them on the Sabbath in the Fischerfeld. I was therefore

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<sup>1</sup> This represented the martyrdom of a Christian child by the Jews.

extremely curious to get to know about their ceremonies. I did not rest till I had often visited their synagogue, attended a circumcision and a wedding, and had formed a picture to myself of the Feast of Tabernacles. Everywhere I was well received, excellently entertained, and invited to come again, for they were persons of influence who had either introduced or recommended me.

Thus, a youthful inhabitant of a great city, I was tossed to and fro from one object to another, and in the midst of the civic quiet and security there were not lacking horrible scenes. Sometimes we were roused from our domestic peace by a fire more or less remote. We were forced to be witnesses of different executions ; and it is also worth remembering that I was also present at the burning of a book. This was the publication of a French comic novel, which indeed spared the State, but not religion and morals.

There was really something terrible in seeing a punishment enacted upon a lifeless book. The packages crackled in the fire and were stirred apart by oven-forks and brought more in contact with the flames. It was not long before the kindled sheets flew about in the air and the crowd greedily snatched after them. We, too, could not rest till we had rummaged out a copy, and there were not a few who likewise knew how to procure for themselves the forbidden pleasure. Indeed, if publicity had been the object of the author, he could not have managed better.

More peaceful inducements, however, took me hither and thither in the city. My father had early accustomed me to do little jobs for him. In particular he enjoined on me to stir up the labourers, whom he had set to work, as they commonly kept him waiting longer than was right, for he wanted to have everything done accurately, and was wont finally to lower the price for a prompt payment. And so I found my way into all the workshops, and as it was natural to me to enter into the circumstances of others, to feel and take pleasure in every special form of human life, so I passed many pleasant hours on account of these commissions, learnt to know every one's method of proceeding, and what were the indispensable conditions of this and that mode of life as regards joy and sorrow, hardships and advantages. Thus I approached that active class which unites the lower and the upper classes. For on the one side

stood those who were busied with the simple and raw products, on the other, those who desire to enjoy something that has already been worked up ; the manufacturer, with his skill and hand, is the mediator by whom the other two receive something from each other ; each in his way is able to gratify his wishes. The family existence of every craft, which took its form and colour from the occupation, was likewise the object of my quiet attention, and so there developed and was strengthened in me the feeling of equality, if not of all men, yet of all human conditions, since to me the basic fact of existence seemed the main point, all the rest indifferent and accidental.

As my father did not easily allow himself an expense which would be at once consumed in a momentary enjoyment, I can scarcely remember that we took a walk together and spent anything in a place of amusement ; on the other hand, he was not niggardly in procuring such things as had a good outward appearance in addition to inward value. No one wished for peace more than he did, although in the latter part of the war he did not experience any inconvenience. With these feelings he had promised my mother a gold jewel box set with diamonds, which she was to receive as soon as peace was publicly declared. In the hope of this fortunate event, they had worked now for some years on this present. The jewel box, which was fairly large, had been executed in Hanau, for my father was on good terms with the gold workers there as well as with the chief of the silk establishment. Many designs were made for it ; a basket of flowers adorned the cover, over which a dove with an olive branch hovered. A vacant space was left for the jewels, which were to be set partly on the dove, partly on the flowers, partly also on the spot where the box is usually opened. The jeweller to whom the complete execution together with the requisite stones were entrusted was called Lautensack, and was a skilful, cheerful man, who like many clever artists seldom did what was necessary, but what he liked and what gave him pleasure. The jewels were soon set in the shape in which they were to be on the cover of the jewel box, on some black wax, and looked very well, but they would not come off to be transferred to the gold. At first my father let the matter rest, but when the hope of peace became more lively and when



finally the conditions—especially the elevation of the Archduke Joseph to the Roman throne—were known more precisely, my father became more and more impatient, and I was obliged to visit the dilatory artist twice every week, finally almost every day. By my ceaseless tormenting and exhortation the work advanced, though slowly enough, for it was of that kind which one can soon take up and lay aside again, and there was always something by which it was thrust out of the way and put aside.

The chief cause of this behaviour, however, was a work which the artist had undertaken on his own account. Every one knew that the Emperor Francis had a great liking for jewels, and especially for coloured stones. Lautensack had expended a considerable sum on such precious stones, and, as it appeared later, more than his means, and out of them he had begun to make a nosegay, in which every stone was to stand out suitably according to its form and colours, and the whole was to make a work of art worthy of being kept in the treasure vaults of an emperor. In his desultory way he had worked on this for many years, and he hastened now to complete it and at last to put it together, because after the peace which was soon hoped for, the arrival of the Emperor was expected at the coronation of his son in Frankfort. My pleasure in getting to know about such objects he made use of in a clever way in order to distract me as a bearer of threats and turn me aside from my intention. He endeavoured to impart to me knowledge of these stones, drew my attention to their qualities and value, so that at last I knew his whole bouquet by heart and could have demonstrated its virtues to a customer quite as well as he. It is even now present to me, and I have certainly seen more costly things but not more graceful specimens for show and magnificence of this kind. Besides this, he possessed a pretty collection of engravings and other works of art, with which he liked to amuse himself, and I passed many hours with him, not without profit. Finally, when the Congress of Hubertsburg was fixed, he did from affection for me something extra, and the dove, together with the flowers, actually came into the hands of my mother at the celebration of the peace.

Many a like commission I also received in order to hurry up the pictures that had been ordered from the painters.

My father was of the firm conviction—and few men were free from it—that a picture painted on wood has a great advantage over one which was only put upon canvas. It was therefore his greatest care to possess good oak boards, for he was well aware that the more careless artists relied upon the joiner in this important matter. The oldest boards were sought out, the joiner had to go accurately to work with gluing, planing, and arranging the same, and they remained preserved for years in an upper room, where they could be sufficiently dried. Such a precious board was entrusted to the painter Junker, who was to represent on it an ornamental flower-pot with the most important flowers drawn after nature in his most artistic and delicate manner. It was just in spring-time, and I never failed to bring him once every week the most beautiful flowers which came to hand ; he immediately put them in, and by degrees composed the whole out of these elements in his most faithful and careful fashion. It happened that I once caught a mouse, which I brought to him and which he wished to copy as being a very pretty animal ; he even really represented it as accurately as possible gnawing an ear of corn at the foot of the flower-pot. Many such inoffensive natural objects, such as butterflies and chafers, were brought in and represented, so that finally, as far as imitation and execution were concerned, a highly valuable picture was put together.

I was therefore not a little surprised when the excellent man formally declared to me one day, when the work was soon to be delivered, that he was not pleased with the picture, since, though it was quite well in details, as a whole it was not well composed, because it had developed in so gradual a manner and he had made a mistake at the beginning in not designing at least a general plan for light and shade as well as for colour, according to which one could arrange the single flowers. He went through with me completely the picture, which for half a year had arisen before my eyes and had in many respects pleased me, and managed to convince me perfectly, much to my regret. Even the copy of the mouse he regarded as a mistake ; for, he said, such creatures gave rise to a kind of horror for many people, and they should not be introduced where one wishes to excite pleasure. As it wont to happen to one who is cured of his prejudice and thinks himself much cleverer than he was before, I had now a

true contempt for this work of art and thoroughly agreed with the artist when he had another board prepared of a like size, on which, according to his taste, he painted a better formed vessel and a more artistically arranged nosegay, also the little living accessories he managed to select and distribute in an ornamental and pleasing fashion. This board also he painted with the greatest care, though altogether after the former copied one, or from memory, which, from long and assiduous practice, came to his aid. Both pictures were now ready, and we had decided pleasure in the last one, which was certainly the more artistic and striking of the two. My father was surprised with two pictures instead of one, and the choice was left to him. He approved of our opinion and the reasons for the same, and especially of our good will and activity; but, after he had considered both pictures for some days, he decided for the first, without saying much about the choice. The artist felt annoyed, took back his second well-meant picture, and could not refrain from the remark to me that the good oaken tablet on which the first was painted had certainly contributed to my father's decision.

As I am again speaking of painting, there comes to my mind a large establishment, where I passed much time, because both it and its managers especially attracted me. This was the great village factory which the painter Nothnagel had executed; he was a skilful artist, but inclined by his talent and way of thinking more to manufacture than to art. In a very large space of courts and gardens all kinds of oilcloths were made, from the coarsest, which are spread with a trowel and are used for baggage-wagons and such-like purposes and carpets which were impressed with figures, to the finer and the finest, on which Chinese and fantastic, sometimes natural flowers, sometimes figures, sometimes landscapes were represented by the pencils of skilful workmen. This multiplicity, to which there was no end, delighted me greatly. The occupation of so many men, from the commonest labour to that to which a certain artistic worth could not be denied, was for me highly attractive. I made the acquaintance of this multitude of younger and older men working in several rooms one behind the other, and sometimes lent a hand myself. The sale of these commodities was extremely brisk. Whoever at that time built or furnished a house wanted to be provided for his lifetime, and

these oilcloths were at any rate indestructible. Nothnagel himself had enough to do with the direction of the whole, and sat in his office surrounded by agents and clerks. The remainder of his time he was busied with his art collection, which consisted principally of engravings, in which, as well as with the pictures in his possession, he at times did business. At the same time he had a great love of etching ; he etched a variety of plates and continued this branch of art into his latest years. As his house lay near the Eschenheim gate, when I visited him my way led me out of the city to some pieces of ground which my father possessed beyond the gates. One was an orchard, the ground of which was used as a meadow, and here my father watched carefully the transplanting of the trees and whatever else served for their maintenance, though the piece of ground itself was leased. What gave him more occupation was a very well-kept vineyard beyond the Friedberg gate, where, between the rows of the vines, rows of asparagus beds were planted and tended with great care. In a good season hardly a day passed in which my father did not go there, and we for the most part accompanied him ; we had delight and enjoyment from the first productions of spring to the last of autumn. We now learnt to be occupied with garden matters, which, as they are repeated every year, became at last completely known and familiar to us. But after the manifold fruits of summer and autumn the vintage at last was the most amusing and the most desired ; indeed, no question that as the wine itself gives to places and districts where it is grown and drunk a freer character, so too these days of the vintage, while they close the summer and at the same time usher in the winter, spread abroad an unbelievable cheerfulness. Pleasure and joy pervades a whole region. In the daytime from every end and corner are heard huzzas and shouting, and at night rockets and Roman candles, now here, now there, announce that people are everywhere awake and lively and would like to prolong the festival as much as possible. The subsequent labour at the winepress and during the fermentation in the cellar afforded us at home a cheerful occupation, and so we usually entered on the winter without exactly knowing how we got there.

We had all the more delight in these rural possessions in the spring of 1763, as the 15th of February of that year

became for us a festal day, on account of the conclusion of the Hubertsberg peace, under the fortunate results of which the greater part of my life was to glide away.<sup>1</sup> But before proceeding further I feel obliged to mention some men who exercised an important influence on my youth.

Von Olenschlager,<sup>2</sup> a member of the house of Frauenstein, magistrate, and son-in-law of the above-mentioned Dr Orth, a handsome, easy-going, sanguine-tempered man. In his official festal costume he might well have represented the most distinguished French prelate. After his academical studies he had employed himself with Court and State business, and his journeys also were directed to those ends. He had a great regard for me, and often conversed with me about things which especially interested him. I was with him when he wrote his "Illustration of the Golden Bull," and he managed to explain to me very clearly the worth and dignity of this document. This led my imagination back to those wild and turbulent times, so that I could not help representing what he related historically, as if it were present, by delineation of character and circumstances and often even by mimicry; in this he had great delight, and by his applause stimulated me to repeat it.

I had from childhood the strange habit of always learning by heart the beginnings of books and the division of a work, first the five books of Moses, then of the "Æneid" and Ovid's "Metamorphoses." I did the same thing with the "Golden Bull," and often provoked my patron to a smile when I cried out quite seriously and unexpectedly: "Omne regnum in se divisum desolabitur, nam principes ejus facti sunt socii furum." The wily man shook his head, laughing, and said doubtfully: "What times they must have been in which the Emperor at a great Imperial Diet could have had such words published in the face of his princes!"

There was a great charm in Olenschlager's society. At his house one saw little society, but he was ever ready for an intellectual amusement, and he induced us young people from time to time to perform a play, for it was thought that such exercises were specially useful for the young. We played the "Canute" of Schlegel, in which I took the part

<sup>1</sup> 1763-92.

<sup>2</sup> 1711-78; is introduced as Narcissus in the "Confessions of a Fair Saint" (Wilhelm Meister).

of the King, my sister that of Elfrida, and Ulfo the younger son of the family. We then ventured on "Britannicus,"<sup>1</sup> for beside our dramatic talents we had to bring the language into practice. I took Nero, my sister, Agrippina, and the younger son, Britannicus. We were more praised than we deserved, and thought we had done it even better than the amount of praise accorded to us. Thus I stood on the best of terms with the family, and am indebted to them for much pleasure and a more rapid development. Von Reineck, of an old noble family, honest but obstinate, a thin, swarthy man, whom I never saw laugh. He had the misfortune of his only daughter eloping with a friend of the family. He pursued his son-in-law with the most violent persecution, and because the tribunals in their formality would not comply speedily or vigorously enough with his desire of vengeance, he quarrelled with them, and there arose dispute on dispute, suit on suit. He withdrew into his house and adjoining gardens, lived in a spacious but melancholy lower room, into which for many years no brush of the white-washer, scarcely perhaps the broom of a servant, had found its way. He could readily endure me, and had specially recommended his younger son to me. His oldest friends, who knew how to humour him, his men of business and agents, he often had to dinner, and then he never omitted inviting me also. He kept a good table, and the wine was still better. But the greatest pain was caused to his guests by a large stove which let out smoke from many cracks. One of the most intimate of his friends ventured once to remark on this, asking his host how he could put up with such an inconvenience all through the winter. Like a second Timon, and Heautontimoroumenos, he answered: "Would to God this was the greatest evil of those which torment me!" It was long before he allowed himself to be persuaded to see his daughter and grandson. The son-in-law never dared to come before him.

My presence had a very favourable effect upon this excellent but unfortunate man, for while he willingly conversed with me and especially instructed me about the world and affairs of State, he seemed to feel himself relieved and cheered. The few old friends who gathered round him

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<sup>1</sup> The tragedy of Racine.

often made use of me, therefore, when they wanted to alleviate his gloomy temper or persuade him to have some diversion. He now really drove out with us many times, and again looked at the neighbourhood on which he had not cast his eyes for many years. He called to mind the old landowners and told stories of their character and actions, in which he always showed himself severe, but often cheerful and witty. We now tried to bring him again among other men, which, however, nearly turned out badly.

About the same age, if not older than von Reineck, was Herr von Malapert, a rich man, who possessed a very fine house in the Horse Market and derived a good income from salt-pits. He, too, led an isolated life, yet in summer he was much in his garden in front of the Bockenheim gate, where he watched and tended a very fine blossoming of pinks.

Von Reineck was also fond of pinks; the season of flowering had come, and some suggestions were made that the two might visit one another. We introduced the subject, and persisted in it so long that at last von Reineck decided to go out with us one Sunday afternoon. The greeting of the two old men was most laconic, indeed, almost pantomimic, and they walked up and down by the long frames of pinks with a truly diplomatic tread. The bloom was exceptionally beautiful, and the particular forms and colours of the different flowers, the advantages of one over the other and their rarity, formed a sort of conversation which seemed to get quite friendly; we were all the more delighted at this, as we saw the most precious old Rhine wine in cut decanters, fine fruit, and other good things served up on a table in a neighbouring arbour. But, alas, we were not to enjoy them. For, unfortunately, von Reineck saw a very fine pink in front of him which drooped its head somewhat; he therefore took very delicately with his fore and middle fingers the stalk near the calyx and lifted the flower from behind upwards so that he could well inspect it. But even this gentle handling annoyed the owner. Von Malapert reminded him quite politely, but stiffly enough and with some self-complacency, of the *oculis, non manibus*.<sup>1</sup> Von Reineck had already let go the flower, but at once took fire at the words, saying with his usual dry and serious manner that it was quite suit-

<sup>1</sup> "Eyes, not hands."

able for an amateur to touch and examine a flower in this way ; whereupon he repeated the gesture, taking the flower once again between his fingers. The friends of both parties—for von Malapert also had one present—were now in the greatest embarrassment. They let one hare chase another (this was our proverbial expression when a conversation was to be interrupted and directed to another subject), but it would not do ; the old gentlemen had become quite silent, and we feared every moment that von Reineck would repeat the act, and then it would be all over with us. The two friends kept their principals apart, while they busied themselves now here, now there, and the wisest thing was to make preparations for departure, and so, alas, we were obliged to turn our backs on the seductive sideboard, yet unenjoyed.

Hofrath Huisgen, not a born Frankforter and of the reformed religion, was therefore not capable of public office, nor that of advocate. This, however, because people put much trust in him as an excellent lawyer, he knew how to carry on quietly both in Frankfort and the imperial courts under an assumed signature. He was sixty years of age when I had writing lessons with his son, and so came into his house. His figure was tall without being thin, and broad without being corpulent. One could not look without apprehension for the first time on his face, which was not only disfigured by smallpox but deprived of one eye. He always wore upon his bald head a perfectly white bell-shaped cap, tied on the top with a ribbon. His dressing-gowns of calamanco or damask were always very clean. He occupied a very cheerful suite of rooms on the ground floor by the Allée, and the neatness of everything corresponded with his cheerfulness. The complete order in his papers, books, and maps made a pleasant impression. His son, Henry Sebastian, who became known by different writings on art matters, gave little promise in his youth. Good-natured but awkward, not rude but blunt, without special inclination for instruction, he tried rather to avoid the presence of his father, while he could get everything he wanted from his mother. I, on the other hand, became more intimate with the old man the more I got to know him. As he only undertook important legal cases, he had sufficient time to occupy and amuse himself in



another manner. I had not lived long in his vicinity and heard his teaching without observing that he stood in opposition to God and the world. One of his favourite books was "Agrippa de Unitate Scientiarum,"<sup>1</sup> which he specially recommended to me and for some time set my young brains in considerable confusion. In the happiness of youth I was disposed to a kind of optimism, and had again pretty well reconciled myself with God or the Gods ; for after a number of years I had come to discover that there is much to be put in the scale against evil, and that one can be saved from dangers and not always break one's neck. I also looked with much tolerance on what men did and pursued, and found much that was praiseworthy, with which my old gentleman would in no way be content. Indeed, when he had once described the world to me from its grotesque side, I noticed that he intended to end the game with an important trump card. He closed firmly his blind left eye, as was his custom in such cases, looked with the other keenly in front of him, and said in a nasal voice : " Even in God I find mistakes."

My Timon-like mentor was also a mathematician, but his practical nature drove him to mechanics, though he did not work himself. He had a clock made according to his own plan, which for that time at least was wonderful, for, as well as the hours and days, it showed the movements of the sun and moon. On Sunday, about 10 o'clock in the morning, he always wound it up himself, which he did the more regularly as he never went to church. I never saw company nor guests at his house. Only twice in ten years do I remember to have seen him dressed and out of doors.

The various conversations which I had with these men were not unimportant, and each of them influenced me in his own way. From each one I had as much attention as his own children, if not more, and each strove to increase his delight in me, as in a beloved son, while he tried to make me into his moral counterpart. Olenschlager wanted to train me to be a courtier, von Reineck a diplomat, man of business. Both, especially the last, sought to disgust me with poetry and authorship. Huisgen wished me to be a Timon of his own fashion, but at the same time an able lawyer, a necessary

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<sup>1</sup> Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim 1486-1535.

profession as he thought, with which in a regular manner one could defend oneself and one's relations against the riff-raff of mankind, come to the assistance of the oppressed, and, above all, pay off a rogue ; the last, however, is neither very feasible nor advisable. If I liked to keep myself at the side of these men to profit by their counsels and discretion, younger persons, only a little older than myself, challenged me to immediate emulation.

Before all others I mention here the brothers Schlosser and Griesbach. As, however, I came into closer relationship with these in course of time, which lasted for many years uninterruptedly, so I only say this much at present that they were then praised as being distinguished in languages and other studies which opened the academic course, and were held up as models, and every one cherished the certain expectation that they would some day accomplish something exceptional in church and state. As regards myself, I also had it in mind to produce something extraordinary, but in what it was to consist was not at all clear to me. Since, however, we are apt to think more about the reward which we are to receive than of the merit which is to be acquired, so, I do not deny, if I thought of a desirable piece of good fortune, this appeared to me most fascinating in the form of the laurel crown which is woven to adorn the poet.

## BOOK V

FOR all birds there are decoys, and every man is led and misled in a way peculiar to himself. Nature, education, surroundings, custom, kept me separated from all that was rude, and though I often came in contact with the people, especially with the artisans, there did not arise from that any closer relationship. To undertake something unusual, perhaps dangerous, I had boldness enough, and often I felt disposed to do so, but I lacked the handle with which to grasp things.

Meanwhile, in a completely unexpected manner I became mixed up in relationships which very nearly brought me into great danger, and at least for a long time into perplexity and distress. My earlier good relationship with that boy whom I have before called Pylades, had continued up to the time of my youth. Certainly we saw each other less often, because our parents did not stand on the best footing with each other, but whenever we met, the old friendly rapture broke out at once. On one occasion we met in the alleys which, between the inner and outer St Gallengate, offer a very pleasant walk. We had hardly greeted one another when he said to me : " I hold to the same opinion about your verses as ever I did. Those which you recently communicated to me I have read aloud to some pleasant companions, and no one will believe that you have made them yourself." " Never mind," said I ; " we will make them and enjoy them, and the others may think and say about them what they like." " There comes the unbeliever now," said my friend. " We will say nothing about it," was my answer. " What is the good ? We cannot convert them." " Not at all," said my friend ; " I cannot let the matter go thus." After a short, indifferent conversation my young comrade, who was all too well intentioned towards me, would not let the matter drop, and said, with some irritation, to him : " Here is now the friend who made the

pretty verses for which you will not give him credit.” “He will certainly not be offended,” answered the other; “for it is an honour which we show him, if we think that more learning is required to make such verses than one of his years possesses.” I made some indifferent reply, but my friend continued: “It won’t be much trouble to convince you. Give him any subject and he will make a poem on the spot.” I agreed, we were both at one, and the third asked me whether I would trust myself to put into verse a nice love-letter which a modest young girl should write to a young man in order to declare her feelings. “Nothing is easier than that,” said I, “if we only had writing materials.” The other brought out his pocket almanac, in which there were a number of white pages, and I sat down on a seat to write. They walked up and down, and did not leave me out of their sight. I at once grasped the situation in my mind, and thought how nice it would be if some pretty child really felt an affection for me and wished to discover it to me in prose or verse. I therefore began without ceremony my declaration, and finished it in a metre wavering between doggerel and madrigal, with the greatest possible *naïveté*, in a short time. When I read it aloud to them, the sceptic was overcome with admiration, and my friend with delight. The request of the former for the possession of the poem I was less able to refuse, as it was written in his almanac book, and I was glad to see in his hands the documentary proof of my capabilities. He departed with many assurances of admiration and affection, and we wished for nothing more than that we should often meet, and we settled soon to go into the country.

Our party took place, and it was joined by several more young people of the same stamp. These were fellows from the middle, indeed one might say from the lower, class, who were not wanting in intelligence, and who besides, because they had gone through school, were possessed of much knowledge and a certain kind of cultivation. In a large rich city there are all kinds of branches of industry. They got on by writing for the lawyers and by advancing the children of the lower class by more teaching than was common in the elementary schools; with grown-up children, who were to be confirmed, they went through the religious instruction; then they assisted brokers or merchants in

some way, and were able to enjoy themselves in a frugal manner in the evening, especially on Sundays and holidays.

On the way, while they highly praised my love-letter, they confessed to me that they had made a very amusing use of it ; they had, namely, copied it with a disguised hand, and with a few pertinent allusions it had been sent to a concerned young man, who was convinced that a girl to whom he paid court at a distance was desperately in love with him and sought an opportunity of becoming more nearly acquainted with him. They confided to me at the same time that he wished for nothing more than to be able also to answer her in verse, but neither he nor they possessed the necessary skill, and so they besought me urgently to compose the desired answer. Mystifications are, and will continue to be, an amusement for idle more or less intelligent people. A pardonable naughtiness, a self-complacent malice are a pleasure for those who have neither resources in themselves nor a wholesome external activity. No age is quite free from such amusement. We had often tricked each other in our boyish years ; many games turned on such mystifications and tricks ; the present jest did not seem to me to go any further : I consented ; they communicated to me many special things which the letter was to contain, and we soon brought it home completed.

A short time afterwards I was pressingly invited by my friend to share in an evening meal with that society. The lover was willing this time to bear the expense, and desired expressly to thank the friend who had shown himself such an excellent poetical secretary.

We came together late enough, the meal was most frugal, the wine drinkable, and as regards the conversation it turned almost exclusively upon jokes about the young man who was present, but indeed not very wide awake, and, after repeated reading of the letter, was not far from thinking that he had written it himself.

My natural good nature did not permit of my finding much pleasure in such malicious dissembling, and the repetition of the same subject soon disgusted me. I should certainly have passed a wretched evening had not an unexpected apparition enlivened me. On our arrival the table was already neatly and properly laid ; sufficient wine had been put out ; we sat down and remained alone,

without requiring further service. But when at last the wine ran short, one of them called out for the maid, but instead of her there entered a girl of uncommon and, when one considered her surroundings, of incredible beauty. "What do you require?" said she, after she had bidden them a friendly good evening. "The maid is ill and gone to bed. Can I serve you?" "There is no wine," said one; "if you could get us a few bottles, it would be very kind." "Now, Gretchen," said the other, "it is only a stone's throw distant." "Why not!" said she, and took a couple of empty bottles from the table and hurried away. Her form, as seen from behind, was even more delicate. The little cap sat so neatly on her small head, which a slender throat united very gracefully with the neck and shoulders. Everything on her seemed choice, and one could survey the whole form more quietly as one's attention was no more exclusively attracted and fascinated by the quiet, honest eyes and lovely mouth. I reproved my comrades for sending the child out alone in the night; they laughed at me, and I was soon consoled when she came back again, for the publican lived only across the street. "Sit down with us," said one of them. She did so, but unfortunately did not come near me. She drank a glass to our good health, and soon withdrew, while she advised us not to remain very long together, and above all not to be so noisy, for the mother was just going to bed. It was not her mother, but the mother of our host.

The form of that maiden followed me from that moment on every path; it was the first abiding impression that a female being had made upon me, and as I couldn't find a pretext for seeing her at home, and would not seek one, I went to church from love of her, and had soon spied out where she sat; and so during the long Protestant service I gazed my fill at her. When I went out, I did not trust myself to address her, still less to accompany her, and was already blessed if she noticed me and seemed to have answered my greeting with a nod. Yet I was not long to be deprived of the happiness of approaching her. They had made that lover, whose poetical secretary I had become, believe that the letter written in his name had been sent to the lady, and had strained his expectation to the uttermost that an answer must soon follow. This also I was to write,

and the roguish company entreated me earnestly through Pylades to expend all my wit and employ all my art in order that this piece should be quite elegant and perfect.

In hope of seeing my fair one again, I at once ~~set to work~~ and thought of everything which would be most pleasing to me, if Gretchen were writing to me. I imagined that I had written ~~everything~~ so entirely from her form, her nature, her manner, and her mind that I could not withhold myself from the wish that it really was so, and I lost myself in rapture only at the thought that something similar might be directed from her to me. Thus I mystified myself while I thought I was making game of another, and much pleasure and much discomfort was yet to arise for me from the affair. But when I was once more reminded, I was ready and promised to come, and did not fail at the appointed hour. There was only one of the young people at home ; Gretchen sat in the window spinning ; the mother was going to and fro. The young man demanded that I should read it aloud to him ; I did so, and read it not without emotion, while I glanced away over the paper at the beautiful child, and thought that I noticed a certain uneasiness in her deportment, a light flush on her cheeks ; I only expressed myself better and in more lively fashion, that which I wished to hear from herself. The cousin, who had often interrupted me with commendations, asked me to make some alterations. They had reference to some passages which, doubtless, suited more the situation of Gretchen than that of the lady, who was of good family, wealthy, well known and respected in the town. After the young man had mentioned to me the desired changes and had fetched writing materials, he excused himself on account of some business for a short time ; I remained sitting on the bench against the wall behind the large table and examined the changes to be made on the large slate, which almost covered the whole table, with a slate pencil which always lay in the window, because on this slate reckonings were often made, many things were noted down, and those coming in and going out even communicated with each other by means of it.

I had for some time written down different things and again rubbed them out, when I exclaimed impatiently : " It won't do ! " " So much the better," said the dear girl in a grave tone. " I wished that it would not do at all.

You should not meddle in such matters." She stood up from the distaff and, coming to me at the table, gave me a severe lecture, with much good sense and friendliness. "The thing seems an innocent game ; it is a game, but not innocent. I have already experienced many cases in which our young people for the sake of such mischief have got into great embarrassment." "What should I do?" I replied. "The letter is written, and they rely on my altering it." "Trust me," she said, "and don't alter it ; nay, take it back, put it in your pocket, go away, and try to make the matter straight through your friend. I will also put in a word, for you see, though I am a poor girl, dependent on these relations, who certainly don't do anything bad, but often for pleasure or profit undertake much that is foolhardy, I resisted them and did not copy the first letter as they asked me to do ; they copied it with a disguised hand, and, if it is not otherwise, so they can do with this. And you, a young man of good family, well-to-do, independent, why do you let yourself be used as a tool in an affair from which certainly no good and perhaps much unpleasantness may befall you?" I was glad to hear her speaking thus continuously, for generally she uttered only a few words in the conversation. My inclination towards her increased incredibly, I was not master of myself, and replied : "I am not so independent as you think, and what is the good of being well-to-do, when the most precious thing which I wish for is lacking to me?"

She had drawn my idea of the poetic epistle towards her and read it half aloud, in a sweet and graceful manner. "That is very nice," she said, while she stopped at a certain naïve point ; "only, it's a pity that it is not destined for a better and real purpose." "That would certainly be very desirable," I exclaimed ; "how happy would he be who receives such an assurance of her affection from a girl whom he deeply loves !"

"There is much required for that," she said, "and yet many things are possible."

"For example," I continued, "if anyone who knew, prized, honoured, and adored you, laid before you such a paper and besought you pressingly, warmly, and in a friendly manner, what would you do?" I pushed the paper nearer to her, which she had already pushed back to me. She



smiled, reflected an instant, took the pen, and subscribed her name. I was beside myself with delight, jumped up, and wished to embrace. "No kissing," she said; "that is so vulgar, but let us love if we can." I had taken up the paper and put it into my pocket. "No one shall have it," said I, "and the affair is closed. You have saved me."

"Now complete the salvation," she said, "and hurry off before they come and you fall into trouble and embarrassment." I could not tear myself away from her, but she asked me in so kindly a manner, while she took my right hand in both hers and pressed it lovingly. Tears were not far from me; I thought I saw her eyes were moist. I pressed my face upon her hands and hurried away. Never had I in my life found myself in such a state of perplexity. The first feelings of love in an uncorrupted youth take altogether a spiritual direction. Nature seems to wish that one sex should become aware by the senses of goodness and beauty in the other. And so there had arisen for me a new world of the beautiful and excellent by the sight of this maiden and by my love for her. I read through my poetical epistle a hundred times, observed the signature, kissed it, pressed it to my heart, and rejoiced in this amiable confession. The more my delight increased, the more did it pain me that I could not immediately visit her, could not see and speak to her again, for I feared the reproaches and importunities of her cousins. The excellent Pylades, who could have arranged the matter, I did not know how to meet. The next Sunday, therefore, I set out for Niederrad, where these associates generally used to go, and actually found them there. I was, however, very much astonished when they, instead of behaving in a cross and distant manner, came to meet me with a joyful countenance. The youngest was in particular most friendly, took me by the hand, and said: "You have lately played us a roguish trick, and we were properly angry with you; but your going away and carrying off the poetical epistle suggested a good idea to us, which perhaps would never have occurred to us otherwise. By way of reconciliation you must entertain us to-day, and you shall learn at the same time the notion we have, which will certainly give you pleasure."

This address embarrassed me not a little, for I had with me just about enough money to regale my friend and myself,

but to treat a whole company, and especially such a one as did not stop at the right time, I was not in the least prepared ; indeed, this proposal astonished me all the more, as otherwise they always insisted most honourably on the plan that each should pay only his own account. They laughed at my embarrassment, and the younger continued : " Let us first sit in the arbour, and then you shall learn more." We sat down, and he said : " When you lately had taken away the love-letter with you, we talked over the whole matter once again, and made the observation that we had gratuitously misused your talent to the vexation of others and our own danger out of pure malice, when we could have employed it to the advantage of us all. See, I have here an order for a wedding poem as well as for a dirge. The second must be ready at once, the first can wait a week. If you can do these, which is easy for you, you will treat us twice and we shall for long remain your debtors." This proposition pleased me in every respect ; for, from my childhood, I had looked with a certain envy on these occasional poems,<sup>1</sup> of which several circulated every week, and especially at important marriages came to light by the dozen, because I thought that I could make such things just as well, if not better. Now was the opportunity offered to show myself, and especially to see myself in print. I showed myself not disinclined. I was made acquainted with the personal particulars and position of the family, I went somewhat aside, made my plan, and produced some stanzas. When, however, I returned to the company and the wine was not opened, the poem began to stick, and I could not deliver it that evening.

" You have still till to-morrow evening," they said, " and we will confess to you that the payment we have received for the dirge is sufficient to procure for us to-morrow another merry evening. Come to us, for it is right that Gretchen should also enjoy it, too, with us, as it was she who led us to this idea."

My joy was unspeakable. On my way home I had only the stanzas that were wanting in my head, wrote down the whole before going to bed, and the next morning made a

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<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, a poem written for a certain occasion, such as a wedding, birthday, etc.

neat fair copy. The day seemed to me infinitely long, and it had scarcely become dark when I found myself again in the small narrow dwelling near the dearest of girls.

The young persons with whom I always came into closer contact in this way were not exactly common, but yet ordinary sort of people. Their activity was praiseworthy, and I listened to them with pleasure when they spoke of the numerous ways and means by which one could earn something, also they liked most to tell stories of those who were now very rich who had started with nothing. Some had, as poor merchants' clerks, made themselves necessary to their patrons, and were at length promoted to being sons-in-law ; others had so enlarged and improved a little business in matches and such like, that they now appeared as rich merchants and tradesmen. Especially for young men, who were active on their feet, the trade of errand boy and agent, and the undertaking of all kinds of commissions and charges for rich men who were helpless, was a means of gaining a livelihood and lucrative. We all heard this willingly, and each one fancied himself somebody, when he imagined at that moment that there was enough in him not only to get on in the world, but even to make a great fortune. No one, however, seemed to carry on this conversation with greater earnestness than Pylades, who at last confessed that he was deeply in love with a girl and was actually engaged to her. The financial condition of his parents did not permit of his going to the University ; he had, however, studied to acquire a fine handwriting, knowledge of accounts and modern languages, and would now do his best in hopes of attaining domestic felicity. The cousins praised him, therefore, though they could not approve of his premature engagement to a girl, and added that while they must acknowledge him to be a fine, good fellow, they did not consider him active or enterprising enough to accomplish anything extraordinary. While he now for his justification, explained in detail what he thought he could do, and how he intended to begin, the others were also excited, and each began to tell what he was able to do and carry on, what path he had already put behind him, and what he saw immediately in front of him. My turn came at last. I was now to represent my way of life and prospects, and while I reflected, Pylades said : " This one proviso I make, that

he must not bring into the account the external advantages of his position. Let him rather tell us a tale how he would proceed if at this moment he were placed entirely on his own resources as we are." Gretchen, who up to this moment had been spinning, stood up and seated herself, as usual, at the end of the table. We had already emptied several bottles, and I began in the best humour to relate the hypothetical history of my life. "First of all then," I said, "I commend myself to you that you may continue the custom which you have begun to bestow on me. If you gradually procure for me the profit of all the occasional poems, and we do not consume it in feasting, I shall soon come to something. Then you must not be annoyed if I dabble in your handicraft." Upon that I told them what I had noticed in their occupations and for which I held myself competent at any rate. Each one had previously estimated his services in money, and I asked them to assist me in keeping my establishment. Gretchen had listened to all hitherto very attentively, and, indeed, in the position which suited her so well, whether she was listening or speaking. With both hands she clasped her folded arms and laid them on the edge of the table. Thus she could sit for a long time without moving anything but her head, which was never done without some reason or meaning. She had often put in a word, and helped me over this or that when we halted in our projects, then she became still and quiet again, as usual. I did not let her out of the sight of my eyes, and one can easily imagine that I had not devised and uttered my plan without reference to her. My affection for her gave to what I said an appearance of truth and probability, that I deceived myself for a moment and imagined myself as isolated and helpless as my story supposed, and in the prospect of possessing her felt extremely happy. Pylades had ended his confession with marriage, and with the rest of us arose the question whether our plans went so far as that. "I have not the least doubt about that," said I, "for, properly speaking, a wife is necessary to each one of us in order to preserve at home and enable us to enjoy as a whole what we have raked together from outside in such a wonderful manner." I made a description of a wife such as I should wish, and it must have been very strange if she had not been the complete image of Gretchen.

The dirge was consumed ; the wedding poem for our advantage stood now at hand ; I overcame all fear and anxiety. As I had many acquaintances I managed to conceal my evening entertainments from my family. To see the dear girl and to be near her was soon an essential condition of my life. The friends had grown just as accustomed to me, and we were almost daily together, as if it could not be otherwise. Pylades had meantime also brought his fair one to the house, and this couple passed many an evening with us. They, as bride and bridegroom, though still very much in the bud, did not conceal their tenderness ; Gretchen's behaviour to me was only suited to keep me at a distance. She gave her hand to no one, not even to me ; she allowed no one to touch her, only she often sat near me, especially if I wrote or read aloud, and then she laid her arm confidently on my shoulder and looked into my book or paper ; but if I wished to take a similar freedom towards her, she withdrew and did not soon come back again. Yet she often repeated this position, indeed all her gestures and movements were very uniform, but always equally fitting, beautiful, and charming. But that intimacy I did not see her practise towards anyone else.

One of the most innocent, and at the same time most entertaining, pleasure parties which I undertook with different societies of young people was that we seated ourselves in the Höchst market-ship, observed the strange passengers packed away in it, and joked with and teased now this one and now that as our pleasure or caprice moved us. At Höchst we got out, when at the same time the market-ship from Mainz entered. In an inn there was a well-spread table, where the better class of those coming and going dined with each other, and then each continued his journey farther, for both ships went back again every time after dining. We sailed up to Frankfort, and had with a very large company made the cheapest water excursion that was possible. Once with Gretchen's cousins I had undertaken this journey, when at table in Höchst a young man joined himself to us, who might be somewhat older than we were. They knew him, and he got himself introduced to me. He had something very pleasing in his manner, without being otherwise distinguished. Coming from Mainz, he went back with us to Frankfort, and he conversed with me about all kinds of things which had reference

to the internal affairs of the city, the public offices and places, on which he seemed to me to be very well informed. When we parted, he said good-bye to me, and added he wished that I might think well of him, because he hoped to avail himself of my recommendation on some occasion. I did not know what he meant by this, but the cousins explained it to me a few days later ; they spoke well of him, and asked me to intercede for him with my grandfather, since a medium position was just now vacant which their friend would be glad to obtain. At first I excused myself, as I had never mixed myself up in things of that kind, but they urged me for so long that I decided to do it. I had already often noticed that in such bestowals of office, which unfortunately were often regarded as matters of favour, the intercession of my grandmother or an aunt had not been without effect. I was now so far advanced as to claim some influence for myself. Therefore, for the sake of my friends, who declared themselves in every way obliged for such a kindness, I overcame the timidity of a grandchild and undertook to deliver a written petition which was handed over to me.

One Sunday, after dinner, when my grandfather was occupied in his garden, all the more as the autumn was drawing near, and I tried to be helpful to him everywhere, after some hesitation I came forward with my request and petition. He looked at it and asked me if I knew the young man. I told him in general what there was to be said, and he rested satisfied with that. " If he has merit and otherwise good testimonials, I will favour him for your sake and his own." He said nothing more, and for a long while I heard nothing of the matter.

For some time I had noticed that Gretchen did not spin any more, but on the other hand busied herself with sewing and, indeed, with very fine work ; this surprised me all the more, as the days had already become shorter and winter was approaching. I thought no more about it, only it disturbed me that sometimes in the morning I did not find her at home as formerly, and without importunity I could not find out where she had gone. Yet one day I was to be very wonderfully surprised. My sister, who was getting herself ready for a ball, asked me to get for her some so-called Italian flowers at a fashionable dealer in fancy goods. They

were made in convents, and were small and pretty. Myrtles especially, dwarf roses, and the like came out quite beautifully and naturally. I did her the favour and went into the shop, in which I had already often been with her. Scarcely had I entered and greeted the proprietress, when I saw a woman sitting in the window, who seemed to me, in a lace cap, very young and pretty, and in a silk mantilla looked very well formed. I easily recognised that she was an assistant, because she was occupied in putting ribbons and feathers on a small hat. The milliner showed me the long box with simple flowers of various sorts ; I looked over them, and glanced again, while I made a choice, at the small lady in the window ; but how great was my astonishment when I became aware of an unbelievable likeness to Gretchen, indeed, at last I was persuaded that it was Gretchen herself. No doubt was left for me when she winked with her eyes and gave me a sign that I must not betray our acquaintance. Now, what with selecting and rejecting, I brought the milliner to despair, more than a lady herself could have done. I had in fact no choice, for I was utterly confused, and at the same time I liked my delaying because it kept me in the neighbourhood of the child, whose disguise troubled me, and yet in this disguise she seemed more attractive than ever. At last the milliner lost all patience, and chose with her own hands a whole bandbox full of flowers, which I was to present to my sister and let her choose. Then I was, as it were, driven out of the shop, while she sent on the box by one of her girls.

Scarcely had I reached home when my father sent for me and disclosed to me the fact that it was now quite certain that the Archduke Joseph<sup>1</sup> would be elected and crowned King of Rome. So important an event one must not await unprepared, nor allow to pass with mere gaping and staring. He wished, therefore, to go through with me the election and coronation diaries of the two last coronations, as well as the last imperial capitulations, in order to notice what new conditions might be added in the present instance. The diaries were opened, and we busied ourselves the whole day with them until deep into the night, while the pretty girl, now in her old home dress, now in her costume, hovered

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<sup>1</sup> Eldest son of Francis I. and Maria Theresa, 1741-90.

ever before me to and fro among the most august objects of the Holy Roman Empire. For this evening it was impossible to see her, and I lay awake through a very restless night. The study of yesterday was zealously continued the next day, and only towards evening could I make it possible to visit my fair one, whom I found in her ordinary house dress. She smiled as she saw me, but I did not venture to say anything before the others. When the whole society had sat down comfortably, she began and said : " It is not fair that you do not confide to our friend what we have lately resolved upon." She went on then to relate that after our recent conversation, when the discussion was how anyone could get on in the world, also something was said as to the way in which a woman could increase the value of her talents and labour and advantageously employ her time. The cousin had in consequence proposed that she should make an experiment at a milliner's who just then was in want of an assistant. They had come to terms with the woman ; she went daily for so many hours and was well paid, only while there, for the sake of propriety, she must adapt herself to a certain dress which she left behind every time, because it was not suited to the rest of her life and occupation. By this declaration I was indeed set at rest, only I did not quite like to know that the pretty girl was in a public shop, and at a place where the fashionable world found a convenient place for gathering. However, I did not allow myself to notice anything, and endeavoured to work off my jealous cares in silence. For this the younger cousin did not allow me much time, as he had come forward again with a proposal for an occasional poem, related to me the personalities, and at once demanded that I should set myself to the invention and composition of the poem. He had already spoken with me several times about the treatment of such a subject, and as in such cases I was very eloquent, he readily asked me to explain to him in detail what is rhetorical in these things, to give him a conception of the affair, and to make use of my own and others' labour of this kind as examples.

The young fellow had a good brain, though without a trace of the poetical vein, and now he went so much into detail and wished to have an account of everything, that I remarked quite loud : " It seems as if you wanted to



encroach on my trade and to rob me of my customers." "I will not deny it," he said, laughing, "for thereby I do you no harm. It will only continue till you go to the University, and till then you must allow me to profit by you." "Most willingly," I replied, and encouraged him myself to make a composition, to select a metre according to the character of the subject, and everything else which might seem necessary. He went to work in earnest, but did not succeed. I had at last to rewrite so much that it would have been easier to have written it all from the beginning myself. This teaching and learning, however, this mutual work, afforded us good entertainment ; Gretchen took part in it, and had many a pretty notion, so that we were all pleased, one may even say happy. By day she worked at the milliner's, in the evening we generally met together, and our contentment was not even disturbed when the commissions for occasional poems at last began to fall off. We felt rather hurt, however, when one of them came back with a protest because it did not suit the person who had ordered it. Meanwhile we consoled ourselves, because we considered it our best piece of work and could therefore declare the other a bad judge. The cousin, who once for all wanted to learn something, invented various problems, in the solution of which we always found sufficient entertainment, but, as they brought in nothing, our little feasts had to be managed more moderately.

That great political subject, the election and coronation of a king of Rome, was pursued with more and more earnestness. The assembling of the electoral college, originally appointed to take place at Augsburg in October 1763, was now transferred to Frankfort, and both at the end of this year and the beginning of the next, preparations went forward which should introduce this important business. The beginning was made by a procession which we had never yet seen. One of our chancery officials on horseback, accompanied by four trumpeters likewise mounted, and surrounded by a guard of infantry, read with a loud and clear voice, at all the corners of the town, a long-winded edict which informed us of the forthcoming proceedings and enjoined on the citizens a becoming behaviour suitable to the circumstances. At the Council, weighty considerations were attended to, and it was not long before the

Imperial Quartermaster, despatched by the hereditary Grand Marshal, made his appearance in order to arrange and point out the residence of the ambassadors and their suites according to the ancient custom. Our house lay in the Palatine district, and we had to provide for a new, though more agreeable billeting. The middle storey, which Count Thorane had formerly occupied, was given up to a cavalier of the Palatinate, and as Baron von Königsthal, the Nuremberg chargé d'affaires, had taken the upper floor, we were still more crowded than in the time of the French. This served me for a new excuse to be out of doors and to pass most of the day in the streets in order to see all that was publicly to be seen.

After the preliminary alteration and arrangement of the rooms in the Town Hall seemed to us worth seeing, after the arrival of the ambassadors one after the other, and their first solemn ascent in a body had taken place on 6th February, we afterwards admired the entry of the Imperial commissaries and their ascent, also to the Römer, which was made with great pomp. The dignified personality of the Prince of Lichtenstein made a good impression; yet connoisseurs maintained that the magnificent liveries had already been used on another occasion, and this election and coronation would scarcely come up to the splendour of that of Charles VII. We younger people were pleased with what we had before our eyes; everything seemed very good, and much of it astonished us.

The electoral congress was at last fixed for 3rd March. The city was set in motion by new formalities, and the mutual ceremonial visit of the ambassadors kept us always on our feet. We were obliged also to watch closely, because we were not only to gape about, but had to observe everything well, in order to give a suitable account of it at home, and in fact to compose many a small essay, on which my father and Herr von Königsthal had deliberated, partly for our exercise and partly for our information. And indeed this was of especial advantage to me, as with regard to the externals I was able tolerably well to set out a living election and coronation diary.

The personalities of the deputies which made a lasting impression on me were, first, the chief ambassador from the electorate of Mainz—Baron von Erthal, afterwards Elector.

Without having anything striking in his figure, he was always very pleasing to me in his black gown trimmed with lace. The second ambassador, Baron von Groschlag, was a well-built man of the world, easy in his outward bearing, but conducting himself with the greatest propriety. He made, above all, a very pleasant impression. Prince Esterhazy, the Bohemian ambassador, was not tall, but well built, lively, and at the same time eminently decorous, without pride or coldness. I had a special liking for him because he reminded me of the Marshal de Broglie. However, the form and dignity of these excellent persons vanished to a certain degree over the prejudice which was entertained for the Brandenburg ambassador—Baron von Plotho. This man, who was distinguished by a certain parsimony both in his own clothing and in his liveries and equipages, was famous as a diplomatic hero from the time of the Seven Years' War. At Regensburg, when the Notary April, accompanied by some witnesses, thought to serve him with a declaration of outlawry which had been issued against his king, he had, with the laconic exclamation: "What! you serve?" thrown him down, or had him thrown down, the stairs. We believed the first, because it pleased us best, also we could well credit it of the little thick-set man with his fiery black eyes glancing here and there. All eyes were directed towards him, particularly when he alighted. There arose every time a sort of joyous whispering, and little was wanted for us to have applauded him or shouted, "Vivat! Bravo!" So high did the King stand, and all who were devoted to him body and soul, in favour with the crowd, among whom, besides the Frankforters, were Germans from all parts.

On the one hand, I had much pleasure in these things, because everything which took place, no matter of what nature it might be, concealed a certain meaning, indicated some internal relation, and such symbolic ceremonies represented, for a moment, as living again the old German Empire almost buried by so many parchments, papers, and books; on the other hand, I could not conceal from myself a secret displeasure, when I was obliged, at home, on my father's account, to transcribe the internal transactions, and at the same time to remark that here several powers, which balanced each other, stood in opposition to one another, and were only so far united in that they intended to limit the

new Regent even more than the old one ; that every one rejoiced in his influence only in so far as he hoped to maintain and enlarge his privileges and to secure more his independence. Yet one was now more attentive than formerly, as one began to be afraid of Joseph II., his violence and probable plans.

With my grandfather and the other members of the Council, whose houses I used to visit, this was no pleasant time, for they had so much to do with the meeting of distinguished guests, complimenting, and the delivery of presents. No less had the magistrate, in general and in particular, to defend himself, to resist, and to protest, as every one on such occasions desires to extort something from him or burden him with something ; and few of those to whom he appeals stand by him or give him assistance. In short, all that I had read in Lersner's "Chronicles" of similar incidents on similar occasions, with admiration of the patience and endurance of those excellent councillors, came vividly before my eyes.

Much annoyance arose also because the town was gradually filled with necessary and unnecessary people. In vain were the courts on the part of the city reminded of the prescription of the Golden Bull, now indeed obsolete. Not only the deputies and their attendants, but many persons of rank, and others who come out of curiosity or with private ends in view, stand under protection, and the question, who is to be billeted out and who is to rent his own lodgings, is not always decided at once. The tumult increases, and even those who have nothing to perform or be responsible for begin to feel uncomfortable. Even we young people, who could quietly contemplate it all, still could not find enough to satisfy our eyes and imagination. The Spanish mantles, the great feathered hats of the ambassadors, and other objects here and there gave a truly antique look ; much, on the other hand, was again so half new or quite modern that there was a motley, unsatisfying, even tasteless appearance. We were therefore glad to hear that great preparations were made on account of the journey to Frankfort of the Emperor and future King, that the proceedings of the College of Electors, which were based on the last electoral capitulation, were proceeding rapidly, and that the Election Day was fixed

for 27th March. Now there was an idea of bring. ~ the insignia of the Empire from Nuremberg and Aix-la-Chapelle, and next we awaited the entrance of the Elector of Mainz, while the disputes with his embassy about the quartering ever continued.

Meanwhile I carried on my chancery labours at home very actively, and was consequently aware of many little suggestions which came in from many sides and had to be regarded in the new capitulation. Every rank wanted to know that its privileges were protected and its importance increased in this document. Many such observations and wishes were, however, put aside ; much remained as it had been, though the suggestors received the most positive assurances that the neglect should in no way prejudice them.

The office of Imperial Marshal was obliged in the meantime to undertake many difficult affairs ; the crowd of strangers increased, and it became ever more difficult to find quarters for them. There was no unanimity as to the boundaries of the different electoral precincts. The magistracy wished to keep from the citizens the burdens which they were not bound to bear, and night and day there were hourly difficulties, appeals, strife, and misunderstandings.

The entrance of the Elector of Mainz took place on 21st March. Then began the cannonading, with which for a long time we had often to be deafened. In the series of ceremonies this solemnity was important : for all the men whom we had seen so far, though they had high rank, were still only subordinates ; but here appeared a sovereign, an independent prince, the first after the Emperor, preceded and accompanied by a great retinue worthy of himself. Of the pomp of this entry I should have much to relate here, if I did not intend to come back to it again later, and indeed on an occasion which no one could easily guess.

On the same day, indeed, came Lavater, on his way home from Berlin, through Frankfort, and looked on at the solemnity. Although now for him such worldly externals had not the least worth, yet the procession with its pomp and all its accessories must have impressed itself clearly on his very lively imagination ; for after several years, when this eminent but peculiar man communicated to me a poetical

paraphrase of, I think, the Revelation of St John, I found the entrance of Antichrist, step for step, figure for figure, detail for detail, imitated from the entrance of the Elector of Mainz into Frankfort, to such a degree that not even the tassels on the heads of the dun-coloured horses were lacking. There is more to be said of this when I come to the epoch of that strange kind of poetry by which it was thought to bring the Old and New Testament stories nearer to our view and feeling, when they were completely transformed into the modern style and clothed with the garments of present life whether common or superior.

How this manner of treatment gradually made itself liked, of that I must tell later on, yet I will here say this much, that it could not well be carried further than by Lavater and his imitators, as one of them described the three holy kings riding into Bethlehem in such modern form that the princes and gentlemen whom Lavater used to visit could not be mistaken.

We will then for the present let the Elector Emmerich Joseph enter the Compostello incognito, so to speak, and turn to Gretchen, whom I, just as the multitude was dispersing, espied in the crowd accompanied by Pylades and his fair one (for these three seemed now to be inseparable). We had scarcely reached one another and greeted, when it was already arranged that we should spend this evening together, and I found myself punctually there. The usual company had assembled, and each one had something to relate, to say, and to remark—how this or that had struck this one or the other most. “Your speeches,” said Gretchen at last, “make me still more perplexed than the events of these days themselves. What I have seen I cannot make out, and should like very much to know what it means.” I replied that it was easy for me to render her this service. She must only say in what she was specially interested. This she did, and while I was going to explain something to her, it appeared that it would be better to proceed in order. I compared not unskilfully these solemnities and functions with a play in which the curtain was let down at will while the actors went on playing; then it was drawn up again and the spectators could again to some extent take part in the action. As I was now very loquacious, when one let me go, I related everything, from the beginning to the present

day, in the best order, and did not hesitate, so as to make my discourse clear, to use the pencil there and the large slate. Only slightly disturbed by some questions and disputes, I brought my discourse to an end to the general satisfaction, while Gretchen by her continued attention greatly encouraged me. She thanked me at last, and, according to her expression, envied all those who are interested in the affairs of this world and know how this and that came about and what it signified. She wished to be a boy, and managed to acknowledge with great kindness that she had been indebted to me for much instruction. "If I were a boy," she said, "we would learn something worth while together at the University." The conversation was continued in this way; she determined definitely to have instruction in French, of the indispensability of which in the shop of the milliner she was well aware. I asked her why she did not go there any more, for latterly, as I could not get away much in the evening, I often passed by the shop in the daytime to please her, so as to see her if only for a moment. She explained to me that she had not wished to expose herself in these restless times. As soon as the city settled down into its former condition she intended to go there again.

Now the talk was of the coming day of election. I managed to tell at length what was going to happen, and how, and to support my demonstration by detailed drawings on the tablet, for I had clearly present to my mind the place of conclave with its altars, thrones, seats, and chairs. We separated at the proper time, and with a peculiar feeling of comfort.

For, with a young couple who are in some degree by nature harmoniously formed, nothing can lead to a more beautiful union than when the girl is anxious to learn and the young man inclined to teach. From that there arises a well-based and pleasant relationship. She sees in him the creator of her spiritual existence, and he in her a creature that ascribes her perfection not to Nature, or chance, nor to a one-sided inclination, but to a mutual will; and this reciprocal effect is so sweet that we cannot be surprised if from the days of the old and new<sup>1</sup> Abelard, from such an

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<sup>1</sup> The "new Abelard" is St Preux in the "Nouvelle Heloise" of Rousseau.

intercourse of two beings the most violent passions and as much happiness as unhappiness have arisen.

The next day there was considerable commotion in the city on account of visits and return visits, which were discharged with the greatest ceremony. But that which specially interested me as a Frankforter citizen, and gave rise to many reflections, was the taking of the oath of security by the Council, the military, and the body of citizens, not through their representatives, but personally and in mass : first of all in the great hall of the Römer, by the magistracy and staff officers ; then on the great square, the Römerberg, by all the citizens according to their different ranks, gradations, or quarterings ; and, finally, by the rest of the military. Here it was possible to survey the whole community at a single glance, gathered together for the most honourable object of swearing security to the head and members of the Empire and unbroken peace during the impending great work. The Electors of Triera and Cologne had now arrived in person. On the evening before the day of election all strangers are sent out of the city, and the gates are closed, the Jews are confined in their quarters, and the Frankforter citizen is not a little proud of remaining alone as witness of so great a solemnity.

Hitherto everything that had taken place was fairly modern, the highest and the high personages moved about only in carriages, but now we were to see them, according to old-fashioned custom, on horseback. The concourse and pressure were extraordinary. I managed to squeeze myself into the Römer, which I knew exactly as a mouse does the private granary, till I reached the main entry, in front of which the Electors and ambassadors, who had just arrived in their state coaches and had assembled above, were now to mount their horses. The stately, well-trained steeds were covered with richly embroidered housings, and ornamented in every way. Elector Emmerich Joseph, a handsome, comfortable-looking man, looked well on horseback. Of the other two I remember less, except that the princes' red mantles, trimmed with ermine, which otherwise we had only been accustomed to see in pictures, appeared to us very romantic in the open air. Also the ambassadors of the absent temporal Electors, in the Spanish dresses of gold brocade and richly trimmed with gold lace, did our



eyes good ; particularly the large feathers which waved magnificently from the hats, which were cocked in the antique style. But what did not please me at all were the short modern breeches, the white silk stockings, and the fashionable shoes. We should have wished to have short boots—gilded as much as they pleased—sandals, or such like, in order that we might see a more consistent costume.

The deportment of the ambassador Plotho was again distinguished from all the rest. He appeared lively and cheerful, and seemed to have no special respect for the whole ceremony. For when his front-rank man, an old gentleman, could not at once mount his horse, and he had therefore to wait for a time at the great entrance, he could not keep from laughing, till his own horse was brought forward, on which he threw himself very adroitly, and was again admired by us as a worthy ambassador of Frederick II. The curtain had again fallen for us. I had indeed endeavoured to force my way into the church, but I found there more discomfort than pleasure. The voters had withdrawn into the Holy of Holies, where long-drawn-out ceremonies usurped the place of a deliberate consideration as to the election. After long delay, pressure, and bustle, the people at last heard the name of Joseph II., who was proclaimed King of Rome.

The thronging of strangers into the city became ever greater and greater. Everybody went about in gala clothes, so that at last one only found dresses entirely of gold worthy of note. The Emperor and King had already arrived at Heusenstamm, a castle of the Counts of Schönborn, and were there in the customary manner greeted and welcomed ; but the city solemnised this important epoch by spiritual festivities of all the religions, by high masses and sermons, and on the secular side by incessant firing of cannons as an accompaniment to the *Te Deum*.

If one had regarded all these public festivities from the beginning onwards as a deliberate work of art, there would not have been much to criticise. All was well prepared, the public scenes began slowly, and became ever more important ; the men grew in numbers, the personages in dignity, their surroundings, as well as themselves, in splendour, and it thus increased every day, so that at last even a well-prepared and calm eye became bewildered.

The entrance of the Elector of Mainz, which we have refrained from describing more completely, was magnificent and imposing enough to signify to the imagination of an eminent man<sup>1</sup> the advent of a great prophesied World Ruler ; even we were not a little dazzled by it. But our expectation was strained to the highest when it was said that the Emperor and future King were approaching the city. At some distance from Sachsenhausen a tent had been erected, in which the whole magistracy remained in order to show the appropriate honour to the chief of the Empire, and to offer the keys of the city. Farther out, on a beautiful spacious plain, stood another—a state pavilion—in which all the electors and ambassadors were disposed for the reception of their Majesties, while their retinue extended along the whole way, so that gradually, as their turn came, they might again set themselves in motion towards the city and enter fittingly into the procession. By this time the Emperor came near the tent, entered it, and the electors and ambassadors, after a reverential reception, withdrew so as to make way for the chief ruler according to order.

The rest of us who had remained in the city in order to admire still more this pomp within the walls and streets than could have been done in the open fields, were very well entertained for a while by the barricade set up by the citizens in the alleys, by the pressure of the people, and by the various jests and indecorums which arose, until the ringing of bells and the thunder of the cannon announced the immediate approach of the Sovereign.

What was specially pleasing to the Frankforters was that on this occasion, in the presence of so many sovereigns and their representatives, the imperial city of Frankfort also appeared as a small sovereign, for her equerry opened the procession ; chargers with armorial trappings, upon which the white eagle on a red field looked very fine, followed him ; then attendants and officials, drummers and trumpeters, and deputies of the Council accompanied by the clerks of the Council in the city livery, on foot. Upon them closed up the three companies of citizen cavalry, very well mounted—the same that we had known from our youth at the reception of the escort and other public occasions. We rejoiced in

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<sup>1</sup> Alludes to Lavater.

the participation of this honour, and in an hundred-thousandth part of a sovereignty which now appeared in its full brilliancy. The different retinues of the Hereditary Imperial Marshal and of the envoys deputed by the six temporal Electors marched along step by step. None of them consisted of less than twenty attendants and two state carriages, some even of a greater number. The retinue of the spiritual Electors was ever increasing, the attendants and domestic officials seemed innumerable, the Elector of Cologne and the Elector of Trier had above twenty state carriages, and the Elector of Mainz quite as many alone. The servants, both on horseback and on foot, were clothed throughout most sumptuously ; the lords in their equipages, spiritual and temporal, had not omitted to appear richly and nobbly dressed and adorned with all the badges of their orders. The train of His Imperial Majesty surpassed all the rest, as was fitting. The riding-masters, led horses, caparisons, and housings drew all eyes to them, and the sixteen six-horse gala carriages of the Imperial Chamberlains, Privy Councillors, High Chamberlain, High Steward, and High Equerry closed, with great pomp, this division of the procession, which in spite of its magnificence and extent was yet only the vanguard. But now the line concentrated itself more and more, while the dignity and pomp were ever increasing. For, in the midst of a chosen escort of their own attendants, most of them on foot and a few on horseback, appeared the electoral ambassadors as well as the Electors in person, in ascending order, each in a magnificent state carriage. Immediately behind the Elector of Mainz ten imperial runners, forty-one lackeys, and eight Heyducks<sup>1</sup> announced their Majesties. The most splendid state carriage, provided even at the back part with an entire window of glass, ornamented with paintings, lacquer, carving, and gilding, covered with red embroidered velvet above and inside, permitted us to see quite comfortably King and Emperor, the long-desired chiefs, in all their glory. The procession was led along a circuitous route, partly from necessity that it might unfold itself, partly so that it should be seen by as many people as possible. It had passed through Sachsenhausen, over the bridge, up the Fahrgasse,

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<sup>1</sup> Attendants dressed in Hungarian costume.

down the Zeile, and turned towards the inner city through the Katharinenpforte, formerly a gate, and since the enlargement of the town an open thoroughfare. Here it had been fortunately realized that the external grandeur of the world had gone on expanding itself for a series of years both in height and breadth. Measurements had been taken, and it had been found that the present imperial carriage could not pass through this gateway, through which many a prince and emperor had driven in and out without striking its carved work and other outward decorations. It was debated, and to avoid an inconvenient circuit it was resolved to take up the pavement and to contrive a gentle ascent and descent. With the same idea, they had removed all the eaves of the shops and booths in the streets, so that neither the crown nor the eagle nor the genii should receive any shock or injury. Much as we had directed our gaze to the high personages when this precious vessel with such precious contents drew near, yet we could not help turning our eyes upon the noble horses, their harness and lacework, but we were specially struck by the strange coachmen and outriders sitting on the horses. They seemed to belong to another nation, yes, even to another world, in their long black-and-yellow coats and caps with large plumes of feathers after the fashion of the Imperial Court. Now the pressure was so great that one could distinguish little more. The Swiss guard on both sides of the carriage, the Hereditary Marshal holding the Saxon sword upwards in his right hand, the Field-Marshal or leaders of the Imperial Guard riding behind the carriage, the imperial pages in a body, and, finally, the Imperial Horse Guard itself, in black velvet frocks with all the seams richly laced with gold, under which were red leather coats and leather coloured camisoles, alike richly decked with gold. From sheer seeing, pointing, and showing one scarcely recovered oneself, so that the hardly less splendidly clad life-guards of the electoral princes were barely looked at ; indeed, we should perhaps have withdrawn from the windows had we not wished to have a sight of our own magistracy, who in their fifteen two-horse carriages closed the procession, and especially in the last one the clerk of the Council, with the keys of the city on red velvet cushions. That our company of city grenadiers covered the rear we thought honourable enough,

and as Germans and as Frankforters we felt ourselves doubly and highly edified by this day of honour.

We had taken our place in a house which the procession, as it returned from the cathedral, had to pass by again. Of religious service, music, ceremonies and solemnities, of addresses and answers, of discourses and reading aloud, there was so much in church, choir, and conclave until it came to the swearing of the electoral capitulations, that we had time enough to partake of an excellent meal and to empty many bottles to the health of the old and young ruler. Conversation, as is usual on such occasions, lost itself in the past, and there were not wanting aged persons who preferred that to the present, at least with regard to a certain human interest and impassioned sympathy which then prevailed. At the coronation of Francis I. everything had not yet been settled as at present ; peace had not yet been concluded ; France, the Electors of Brandenburg, and the Palatinate were opposed to the election ; the troops of the future Emperor were stationed at Heidelberg, where he had his headquarters, and the imperial insignia coming from Aix-la-Chapelle were almost carried off by the inhabitants of the Palatinate. Meanwhile there were negotiations, and by neither side was the affair conducted in the strictest fashion. Maria Theresa, though then expecting a child, came to see in person the coronation of her husband carried into effect. She arrived at Aschaffenburg, and went on board a yacht in order to come to Frankfort. Francis, from Heidelberg, thinks of meeting his wife, but comes too late ; she has already departed. Incognito, he throws himself into a little boat and hurries after her, reaches her ship, and the loving pair are delighted at this surprising meeting. The news spreads at once, and all the world sympathises with this tender pair so richly blessed with their children, who have been so inseparable since their union that once on a journey from Vienna to Florence they were forced to keep quarantine together on the Venetian border. Maria Theresa is welcomed in the city with shouts of joy, she enters the Roman Emperor Inn, while on the Bornheim heath a great tent is erected for the reception of her husband. There of the spiritual Electors only that of Mainz is found, and of the deputies of the temporal Electors, only those of Saxony, Bohemia, and Hanover. The entry begins, and what is lacking to it in

completeness and pomp is richly compensated for by the presence of a beautiful lady. She stands on the balcony of the well-situated house and greets her husband with cries of "Vivat" and clapping of hands; the people join in, stirred to the greatest enthusiasm. Since the great are, after all, men, the citizen, when he wishes to love them, thinks of them as his equals, and that he can do most fittingly when he can represent them to himself as loving husbands, tender parents, attached brothers and sisters, loyal friends. At that time all good had been wished and prophesied, and to-day it was seen fulfilled in the first-born son, to whom every one felt well disposed on account of his handsome, youthful form, and on whom the world set the greatest of hopes on account of the noble qualities which he showed.

We had become quite absorbed in the past and the future, when some friends coming in recalled us again to the present. They were of those who knew the value of novelty and therefore hasten to announce it first. They were even able to tell of a fine human trait of these exalted persons whom we had seen go by in the greatest pomp. It had been arranged that on the way between Heusenstamm and that great tent the Emperor and King should meet the Landgrave of Darmstadt in the forest. This old prince, who was now approaching the grave, wished once more to see the master to whom in former times he had devoted himself. Both might remember the day when the Landgrave brought over to Heidelberg the decree of the Electors choosing Francis as Emperor, and replied to the costly presents which he received with protestations of unutterable devotion. These high personages stood in a wood of firs, and the Landgrave, weak with old age, supported himself against a pine in order to continue the conversation which on both sides was not without emotion. The place was therefore marked in an innocent way, and we young people often wandered to it. Thus we had passed several hours in remembrance of the old and consideration of the new, when the procession, though shortened and more compact, passed again before our eyes, and we could observe and mark the detail more closely and imprint it on our minds for the future.

From that moment the city was in uninterrupted movement, for until each and every one whom it behoved and of

whom it was required had paid their respects to the highest dignitaries and had exhibited themselves one by one, there was no end to the marching to and fro, and the court of each one of the high persons present could quite conveniently be repeated in detail.

Now the insignia of the Emperor arrived.<sup>1</sup> But that nothing should be lacking from ancient usage, they had to remain in the field half the day till late into the night on account of a dispute about territory and escort between the Elector of Mainz and the city. The latter gave way, the people of Mainz escorted the insignia as far as the barrier, and so the affair terminated for the time. In those days I could not settle myself. At home I had to write and to copy ; one wanted and had to see everything ; and so March came to an end, the second half of which had been for us so full of festivals. Of that which had passed and of what was to be expected on the coronation day I had promised Gretchen a true and detailed account. The great day drew near ; I had in my mind more how I should tell it to her than of what actually was to be told. I worked up everything which came under my eyes and my pen rapidly for this immediate and only use. At length I reached her abode one evening rather late, and was rather pleased with the thought how my discourse this time would succeed much better than the first unprepared one. But often a momentary incitement brings us, and others through us, more joy than the most deliberate purpose can procure. I certainly found much the same society, but there were some unknown persons among them. They sat down to play, only Gretchen and her younger cousin remained with me at the slate. The dear girl expressed quite charmingly her delight that she, though a stranger, had passed for a citizen on the election day, and had taken part in that unique spectacle. She thanked me most warmly because I had managed to take care of her, and for having had the attentiveness to procure for her, through Pylades, all sorts of admission by means of tickets, directions, friends, and intercessions.

She liked to hear about the jewels of the Empire. I promised her that we should, if possible, see these together.

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<sup>1</sup> 28th March.

She made some jesting remarks when she learned that the garments and crown had been tried on the young King. I knew where she would see the solemnities of the coronation day, and made her attentive to everything that was coming, and particularly to what might be exactly inspected from where she was. So we forgot to think about time ; it was already past midnight, and I found that, unluckily, I had not got the house key with me. Without creating the greatest disturbance I could not get into the house. I communicated my embarrassment to her. "After all," she said, "it will be best for the company to remain together." The cousins and the strangers had already this idea, because one did not know where they could put up for the night. The affair was soon decided ; Gretchen went to cook coffee, after she had lighted and brought in a great brass family lamp, provided with wick and oil, because the candles threatened to burn out.

The coffee cheered us up for some hours, but the sport gradually slackened ; conversation came to an end ; the mother slept in the great chair ; the strangers, tired from the journey, nodded here and there. Pylades and his fair one sat in the corner. She had laid her head on his shoulder and slept, and he did not keep awake long. The younger cousin, sitting opposite me by the slate, had crossed his arms before him and slept with his face resting on them. I sat in the window corner, behind the table, and Gretchen near me. We talked together quietly, but at last sleep overcame her ; she leant her head on my shoulder and was soon fast asleep. There I now sat alone, watching, in the most strange position in which the kind brother of death knew how to put me to rest also. I feel asleep, and when I awoke again it was already clear day. Gretchen stood before the mirror and put her little cap straight ; she was more charming then ever, and pressed my hands quite cordially when I departed. I crept home by a roundabout way, for on the side towards the little Stag-ditch my father had made a little peep-hole in the wall, not without the opposition of his neighbour. We avoided this side when, on our way home, we did not wish to be noticed by him. My mother, whose mediation was always helpful to us, had sought to excuse my absence in the morning at breakfast by my having gone out early, and therefore from this innocent night I experienced no unpleasant consequences.



Above all, taken as a whole, the infinitely various world which surrounded me made upon me only a very simple impression. I had no interest except to mark exactly the outside of the objects, no business but that which my father and Herr von Königsthal laid upon me, by which indeed I became aware of the inner course of things. I had no liking except for Gretchen, and no other intention except to see and to grasp everything in order to be able to repeat it with her and explain it to her. Often when such a procession was going by, I described it half aloud to myself to assure myself of all the particulars, and for this attention and accuracy to be praised by my fair one ; the applause and recognition of the others I regarded only as an extra.

I was indeed introduced to many exalted and distinguished persons, but partly, no one had time to trouble himself about others ; partly, older people do not know at once how they should converse with a young man and probe him. I, on my side, was not particularly skilful in adapting myself to people. Usually I gained their favour, but not their praise. Whatever occupied me was completely present to me, but I did not inquire whether it might also be suitable to others. For the most part, I was too lively or too quiet, and appeared either importunate or reserved, according as people attracted or repelled me ; and so I was regarded as full of promise, but at the same time was held to be eccentric. The coronation day dawned at last—3rd April 1764 ; the weather was favourable, and every one was in motion. They had assigned to me, near several relations and friends, in the Römer itself, in one of the upper storeys, a good place, where we could completely overlook the whole. Very early in the morning we betook ourselves to the spot, and now from above, as in a bird's-eye view, surveyed the arrangements which we had the day before inspected more closely. There was the newly erected fountain, with two large tubs right and left, into which the double eagle on the post was to pour white wine on this side and red wine on that from its two beaks. There, gathered together into a heap, lay the oats ; here stood the large wooden hut, in which we had already, several days before, seen the whole fat ox roasted and basted on a huge spit before a charcoal fire. All approaches which led from the Römer and other streets back to the Römer were secured on both sides

by barriers and guards. The great square was gradually filled, and the surging and pressure became ever stronger and more in motion, because the crowd always, where possible, strove to reach the spot where some new scene arose and something particular was announced.

All this time there reigned a tolerable stillness, and when the alarm bell was sounded, all the people seemed seized with terror and amazement. That which stirred the attention of all who could overlook the square from above was the procession in which the lords of Aix-la-Chapelle and Nuremberg brought the imperial jewels to the cathedral. These, as palladia, had received the first place in the carriage, and the deputies sat before them on the back seat with becoming reverence. The three Electors now betook themselves to the cathedral. After the handing over of the insignia to the Elector of Mainz, the crown and sword are immediately carried to the imperial quarters. The further arrangements and various ceremonies occupied meanwhile the chief persons as well as the spectators, as we other well-informed people could easily imagine.

Before our eyes meanwhile the ambassadors ascended to the Römer, from which the canopy is carried by the non-commissioned officers into the imperial quarters. Immediately the Hereditary Marshal, Count von Pappenheim, bestrides his horse ; a very handsome, slenderly built gentleman, whom the Spanish dress, rich doublet, golden mantle, the high feathered hat, and the loose flying hair became very well. He sets himself in motion, and amid the ringing of all the bells, the ambassadors followed him on horseback to the imperial quarters in still greater magnificence than on the day of the election. One would have liked to have been there, as indeed on this day one would have wished to be in several places at once. We told each other, however, what was going on there. Now the Emperor is putting on his domestic robes, we said, a new dress made after the old Carolingian pattern. The hereditary officers receive the imperial insignia and get on horseback with them. The Emperor in his robes, the Roman King in the Spanish habit, also mount their steeds, and while this takes place, the endless procession which precedes them has already announced them to us.

The eye was already wearied by the multitude of richly

clad attendants and the other remaining magistrates, and by the nobility moving along in stately fashion, and when the electoral envoys, the hereditary officials, and, finally, under the richly embroidered canopy carried by twelve aldermen and senators, the Emperor, in romantic costume, and to the left, a little behind him, his son, in Spanish dress, slowly floated along on magnificently adorned horses, the eye was no more equal to the sight. One would have wished by some magic formula to fix the scene, if but for a moment, but the splendour passed by without stopping, and the space which was scarcely quitted was filled in again by the crowd, who poured in like waves.

But now a new pressure took place ; for another approach from the market to the Römer gate had to be opened, and a road of planks to be bridged over it, which the procession, returning from the cathedral, had to walk.

What went on in the cathedral, the endless ceremonies which precede and accompany the anointing, the crowning, the dubbing of knighthood—all this we were glad to hear told afterwards by those who had sacrificed much else so as to be present in the church. The rest of us meanwhile, in our places, partook of a frugal meal, for we were obliged on the most festal day which we had experienced to content ourselves with cold viands. On the other hand, the best and oldest wine was brought out of all the family cellars, so that in this respect at least we celebrated the ancient festival in ancient style.

In the square the sight most worth seeing was now the bridge, which had been finished, and was covered with orange and white cloth, and we were now to admire the Emperor walking on foot, whom we had first gazed at in the carriage, then mounted on horseback ; and strangely enough, we were most pleased with the first, for we thought that in this way he showed himself in the most natural and also the most dignified fashion.

Older persons, who had been present at the coronation of Francis I., related that Maria Theresa, beautiful beyond measure, had looked on at this solemnity from a balcony window of the Frauenstein house, which was close to the Römer. As her consort in his strange disguise returned from the cathedral, and seemed to her, so to speak, like a ghost of Charlemagne, he had, as if in jest, raised both his

hands and shown her the imperial globe, the sceptre, and the strange gloves, at which she had broken out into immoderate laughter, which served for the greatest delight and edification of the crowd, which was thus honoured by seeing with their eyes the good and natural matrimonial understanding of the most exalted pair in Christendom. But when the Empress, to greet her consort, waved her handkerchief and shouted a loud "Vivat" to him, the enthusiasm and jubilation was raised to the highest pitch, so that the cheers of joy knew no end.

Now the sound of bells and the van of the long procession, which quite quietly passed over the many-coloured bridge, announced that all was over. The attention was greater than ever, the procession more distinct than before, especially for us, as it now came quite up to us. We saw it, as well as the whole square, which was thronged with people, almost as if on a ground-plan. Only at the end the magnificence was too much crowded, for the ambassadors, the hereditary officers, Emperor and King under the canopy, the three spiritual Electors who immediately followed, the aldermen and councillors dressed in black, the gold embroidered canopy—all seemed only one mass, which moved by a single will, splendidly harmonious, and so amid the sound of the bells, stepping from the temple, beamed towards us as something holy.

A politico-religious ceremony possesses an infinite charm. We see the earthly Majesty before our eyes, surrounded by all the symbols of its might; but while it bows before the heavenly power, it brings the communion of both before our minds. For even the individual can only affirm his relationship with the Deity when he submits himself and adores.

The rejoicings which resounded from the market-place spread themselves now over the whole square, and a boisterous "Vivat" burst from thousands and thousands of throats, and certainly from hearts, too. For this great festival was to be the pledge of a lasting peace, which indeed brought happiness to Germany for many years.

Several days before, it had been made known by public proclamation that neither the bridge nor the eagle over the fountain were to be exposed to the people, and therefore not to be touched by them as formerly. This was done to

guard against many an unavoidable accident by such a rush of persons. But in order to sacrifice in some degree to the genius of the mob, persons specially appointed went behind the procession, loosened the cloth from the bridge, rolled it up like a flag, and threw it into the air ; from this certainly no accident arose, but a laughable mishap, for the cloth unrolled itself in the air, and, as it fell down, covered a larger or smaller number of people. Those now who seized the ends and drew them towards themselves, jostled all those in the middle to the ground, enveloped and annoyed them so long till they tore or cut themselves through, and every one in his way had carried off a corner of the stuff sanctified by the footsteps of Majesty.

I did not long look on at this wild amusement, but hurried from my high position, through all kinds of little steps and passages to the great Römer stairs, where the distinguished and noble multitude, which had been stared at from the distance, was to ascend in an undulating fashion. The pressure was not great, because the entrances to the Town Hall were well guarded, and I fortunately reached at once the iron balustrade above. Now the chief persons ascended past me, while their attendants remained behind in the lower arched passages, and I could observe them on the thrice-broken stairs from all sides, and at last quite close. Finally, both their Majesties came up. Father and son were dressed altogether like Menæchmi.<sup>1</sup> The Emperor's domestic robes of purple-coloured silk, richly adorned with pearls and stones, as well as the crown, sceptre, and imperial orb, struck the eye with good effect : for everything was new, and the imitation of the antique in good taste. He moved also quite easily in his attire, and his true-hearted, dignified countenance indicated at once the Emperor and the father. The young King, on the other hand, in his monstrous articles of dress, with the jewels of Charlemagne, dragged himself along as in a disguise, so that he himself, looking at his father from time to time, could not refrain from laughing. The crown, which it had been necessary to stuff a good deal, stood out from his head like an overhanging roof. The dalmatica,<sup>2</sup> the stole,<sup>3</sup> well as they had been fitted and

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<sup>1</sup> Twins—from the so-named play of Plautus.

<sup>2</sup> White upper garment with large sleeves.

<sup>3</sup> Long band of white silk.

taken in by sewing, afforded by no means an advantageous appearance. The sceptre and imperial orb caused admiration, but one could not deny that one would rather have seen, for the sake of a more favourable effect, a strong form suited to the dress invested and adorned with it.

The doors of the great hall were scarcely closed behind these figures when I hurried to my former place, which, being already occupied by others, I only regained with some trouble. It was just the right time when I again took possession of my window ; for the most remarkable thing which was to be seen publicly was just about to take place. All the people had turned towards the Römer, and reiterated shouts of " Vivat " gave us to understand that the Emperor and King were showing themselves in their vestments to the populace on the balcony window of the great hall. But they were not alone to serve as a spectacle, since another strange spectacle passed before their eyes. First of all, the handsome, slender Hereditary Marshal flung himself on his steed ; he had laid aside his sword ; in his right hand he held a silver-handled measure, and a tin spatula in his left. He rode within the barriers to the great heap of oats, sprang in, filled the vessel to overflowing, smoothed it off, and carried it back again with great decorum. The imperial stable was now provided for. The Hereditary Chamberlain then rode likewise to the spot and brought back a basin with ewer and towel. But more entertaining for the spectators was the Hereditary Carver, who came to fetch a piece of the roasted ox. He, too, rode with a silver dish through the barriers to the large wooden kitchen, and came forth again with his dish covered that he might take his way to the Römer. The turn came now for the Hereditary Cup-bearer, who rode to the fountain and fetched wine. So the imperial table was now furnished, and all eyes were directed to the Hereditary Treasurer, who was to throw out the money. He, too, was mounted on a beautiful steed, to the sides of whose saddle, instead of the pistol-holsters, a couple of splendid bags embroidered with the arms of the Palatinate were suspended. He had no sooner set himself in motion than he plunged his hands into those pockets and generously scattered right and left gold and silver coins, which every time shone merrily in the air like metallic rain. A thousand hands waved instantly

in the air to catch the gifts, but the coins had scarcely fallen down before the crowd tumbled over each other on the ground, and wrestled violently for the pieces which might have reached the earth. As this movement was always repeated on both sides when the giver rode forwards, it afforded the spectators a very amusing sight. At the close it became most lively, when he threw out the bags themselves and every one tried to catch the highest prize. Their Majesties had retired from the balcony, and again an offering was to be made to the mob, who in such cases would rather steal the gifts than receive them quietly and thankfully. In more rude and blunter times the custom prevailed of giving up at once the oats after the Hereditary Marshal had taken his share, the fountain and the kitchen after the cup-bearer and the carver had performed their office. But this time, in order to guard against all ill-luck, order and moderation were maintained as far as was possible. But the old malicious jokes, that when one had filled a sack with oats another cut a hole in it, and other such pretty things, were revived. With regard to the roasted ox, a serious battle on this occasion, as usual, was waged. This could only be contested *en masse*. Two guilds, the butchers and the wine porters, had, according to custom, so posted themselves that one of the two must have a share in the monstrous roast. The butchers considered that they had the greatest right to an ox which they delivered entire into the kitchen; the wine porters, on the other hand, claimed it because the kitchen was built near the abode of their guild, and because they had gained the victory the last time, as the horns of that captured steer were still to be seen projecting from the latticed gable window of their guild and meeting-house as a sign of victory. Both guilds had very strong and capable members, but which of them gained the victory this time, I cannot remember.

But as a festival of this kind must always close with something dangerous and frightening, it was really an alarming moment when the wooden kitchen itself was made a prize. The roof of it swarmed instantly with men, without one knowing how they got up there: the boards were torn loose and hurled down, so that we could not help thinking, especially at a distance, that each would kill some of those pressing on. In a trice the hut was unroofed, and some

individuals hung to the beams and rafters in order to pull them out of their joints ; nay, many hovered above on the posts which had been sawn off below, the whole frame-work swung backwards and forwards and threatened a sudden downfall. Sensitive persons turned their eyes away, and everybody expected a great calamity, but one did not hear of any harm done, and everything, though impetuous and violent, passed off happily.

Every one now knew that the Emperor and King would return from the Cabinet, whither they had retired from the balcony, and dine in the great hall of the Römer. One had been able to admire the arrangements made for it the day before, and my most ardent wish was to cast a look in to-day where possible. I betook myself, therefore, along the usual path to the great staircase, opposite which stands the door of the great hall. Here I gazed at the distinguished persons who this day avowed themselves the servants of the head of the Empire. Forty-four counts, all splendidly dressed, went past me carrying the food from the kitchen, so that the contrast between their dignity and their occupation might be for a boy very bewildering. The crowd was not great, but, considering the small space, sufficiently perceptible. The door of the hall was guarded, while those who were authorised went frequently in and out. I saw one of the Palatinate domestic officials, whom I asked whether he could not take me in with him. He did not deliberate long, gave me one of the silver vessels which he was just then carrying—which he could do more readily as I was neatly clad—and so I reached the sanctuary. The Palatinate buffet stood on the left, directly by the door, and with a few steps I found myself on the elevation of it, behind the barriers.

At the other end of the hall, immediately by the windows, raised on the steps of the throne, under canopies, sat the Emperor and King in their robes, but the crown and sceptre lay at some distance behind them on gold cushions. The three spiritual Electors, their buffets behind them, had taken their places on single elevations : the Elector of Mainz opposite their Majesties, the Elector of Trier at the right, and the Elector of Cologne on the left. This upper part of the hall was dignified and cheerful to behold, and excited the remark that the spiritual power likes to keep in



with the ruler as long as possible. On the other hand, the buffets and tables of all the temporal Electors, which were, indeed, magnificently ornamented, but without occupants, made one think of the misunderstanding which had gradually arisen for centuries between them and the head of the Empire. The ambassador of the same had already withdrawn in order to dine in a side chamber, and if the greater part of the hall took on a sort of ghostly appearance, because so many invisible guests were being served so magnificently, there was a large unfurnished table in the middle which was still more sad to look upon, for here there also stood so many covers empty, because all those who in any case had a right to sit there, for the sake of appearance, kept away, so that on the greatest day of honour they might not give up any of their honour, if, indeed, they were then to be found in the city.

Neither my years nor the press of present objects permitted me to make many reflections. I endeavoured to see everything as much as possible, and when the dessert was brought in, and the ambassadors in order to pay their court re-entered, I sought the open air, and managed to refresh myself with good friends in the neighbourhood after the day's half fasting, and to prepare for the illuminations in the evening.

This brilliant evening I intended to celebrate in a cheerful way, for I had agreed with Gretchen, Pylades, and his fiancée that we would meet somewhere at nightfall. The city was already lighted up at every corner and end when I met my beloved. I offered Gretchen my arm ; we went from one quarter to another, and found ourselves very happy together. The cousins at first were also of our party, but afterwards they lost themselves in the mass of the people. In front of the houses of some of the ambassadors, where splendid illuminations were placed (those of the Elector-Palatine were specially distinguished), it was as bright as day. So as not to be recognised, I had disguised myself to some extent, and Gretchen made no objection. We admired the different brilliant representations and the fairy-like structures of flame by which one ambassador thought to surpass the other. The arrangement of Prince Esterhazy was superior to all the rest. Our small society was charmed both with the invention and execution, and we were just

hoping to enjoy it well in detail, when the cousins met us again and spoke of the glorious illumination with which the Brandenburg ambassador had adorned his quarters. We were not displeased at taking the long way from the Horse-market to the Saalhof, but found that we had been tricked in a villainous manner.

The Saalhof is towards the Main a regular and stately building, but the front directed to the city is very old, irregular, and unsightly. Small windows, harmonious neither in form nor size, neither in a line nor placed at equal distances, gates and doors arranged without symmetry, ground floor mostly turned into shops, form a confused exterior, which is never observed by anyone. Now here they had followed the accidental, irregular, disconnected architecture, and every window, every door, every opening, was surrounded by lamps, as indeed can be done with a well-built house, but here the most wretched and ill-formed of all façades was quite incredibly placed in very clear light. If one amused oneself with this as with the jests of Pagliasso,<sup>1</sup> though not without hesitation, since every one must recognise something intentional in it—as one had before commented on the outward deportment of von Plotho, who was so much prized in other respects, and when one was once inclined to him, one admired him as a wag who, like his king, would place himself above all ceremonies—nevertheless, one returned gladly to the fairy kingdom of Esterhazy. This eminent envoy, in order to honour the day, had quite passed over his own unfavourably situated quarters, and had caused the great esplanade of lime trees in the Horse-market to be decorated in front with a portal illuminated with colours, but at the back with a still more magnificent prospect. The entire enclosure was marked by lamps. Between the trees stood pyramids of lamps and globes upon transparent pedestals; from one tree to another were stretched glittering garlands, on which floated suspended lights. In many places bread and sausages were distributed among the people, and there was no lack of wine.

Here now we walked four abreast very comfortably up and down, and I, at Gretchen's side, thought that I

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<sup>1</sup> A sort of buffoon of the old Italian theatre.

really wandered in those happy Elysian fields where they break from the tree crystal cups which immediately fill themselves with the wine that is desired, and shake down fruits which change into every kind of food at will. At last we, too, felt such a need for food, and, guided by Pylades, we found quite a neat, well-arranged eating-house ; as we met with no more guests, for every one was wandering about the streets, we were all the better pleased, and passed the greatest part of the night in the feeling of friendship, love, and attachment, most happily and cheerfully. When I accompanied Gretchen to the door she kissed me on the forehead. It was the first and last time that she showed me this favour, for, alas, I was not to see her again.

The next morning I was still lying in bed when my mother entered, disturbed and anxious. One could easily see in her when she was really distressed. "Get up," she said, "and be prepared for something unpleasant. It has come out that you frequent very bad company and that you have mixed yourself up in most dangerous and bad affairs. Your father is beside himself, and we have only been able to get this much from him, that he will investigate the matter by means of a third party. Stay in your room and await what may happen. Councillor Schneider will come to you ; he has the commission from your father as well as from the authority, for the matter is already pending and may take a very bad turn."

I saw that they took the matter for much worse than it was, yet I felt myself not a little disgusted, even if only the actual state of things were discovered. My old "Messiah"-loving friend at last entered ; tears stood in his eyes, he seized me by the arm, and said : "I am heartily sorry to come to you about such an affair. I could not have thought that you could have gone astray so far. But what does not evil company and bad example do ? And so can a young inexperienced man step by step be led to crime." "I am conscious of no crime," I replied at once, "and as little of having frequented evil company."

"The question is not now of defence," he said, interrupting me, "but of investigation, and on your side of a sincere confession." "What do you want to know ?" I retorted. He sat down, drew out a paper, and began to question me. "Have you not recommended N. N. to your grandfather

as a candidate for the — place?" I answered, "Yes." "Where have you got to know him?" "In my walks." "In what company?" I started, for I did not want to betray my friends. "Silence will do no good," he continued, "for it is all sufficiently known."

"What is known?" then said I.

"That this man has been introduced to you by others like him, and indeed by —." Here he mentioned the names of three persons whom I had never seen nor known, which I then at once explained to the questioner. "You pretend," he continued, "not to know these men and have not often had meetings with them."

"Not in the least," I replied, "for, as I have said, apart from the first one, I do not know one of them, and even him I have never seen in a house."

"Haven't you often been in — Street?"

"Never," I replied. "This was not quite true. I had once accompanied Pylades to his sweetheart, who lived in the street; we had, however, entered by the back door and remained in the summer-house. I therefore considered that I might allow myself the subterfuge, that I had not been in the street itself."

The good man asked some more questions, all of which I could deny, because everything which he wished to know was quite unknown to me. At last he seemed to become vexed, and said: "You reward my confidence and goodwill very badly; I have come in order to save you. You cannot deny that you have composed letters for these people themselves or for their accomplices, have furnished writings, and so have been helpful to their evil acts. I have come to save you, for the question is nothing less than forged handwriting, false wills, counterfeit promissory notes, and such-like things. I have come not only as a friend of the family, I have come in the name and at the command of the authorities, who, having regard to your family and your youth, wish to spare you and save other young persons, who, like you, have been enticed into the net." It was astonishing to me that among the persons whom he mentioned, none of those were to be found with whom I had intercourse. The circumstances touched one another, but did not agree together, and I could still hope to save my young friends. But the excellent man became ever more

insistent. I could not deny that I had often come home late at night, that I had contrived to get myself a house key, that I had been noticed more than once with people of inferior rank and suspicious appearance at places of amusement, that girls had been mixed up in the affair ; enough, everything seemed to be discovered but the names. This encouraged me to remain firm in my silence.

"Do not let me go away from you," said my excellent friend ; "the affair admits of no delay ; immediately after me another will come who will not give you so much scope. Don't make a bad affair worse by your obstinacy."

I now represented to myself very vividly the good cousins, and particularly Gretchen ; I saw them arrested, tried, punished, disgraced, and it went through my soul like a flash of lightning that the cousins, though they observed all rectitude towards me, might have engaged in such bad affairs, at least the eldest, whom I had never quite liked, who always managed to come home late, and had little that was cheerful to relate. Still I kept back my confession. "I am conscious," I said, "personally of nothing wrong, and on that side can be quite at ease ; but it is not impossible that those with whom I have associated may have rendered themselves guilty of some daring or illegal act. They may be sought, found, convicted, and punished. I have nothing hitherto to reproach myself with, and will not do any wrong to those who have behaved kindly and well to me."

He did not let me finish, but called out, with some agitation : "Yes, they will be found. In three houses these rascals met together." (He named the streets, pointed out the houses, and, unfortunately, there was among them one to which I was accustomed to go.) "The first nest is already broken up," he continued, "and at this moment the other two will be. In a few hours all will be clear. By an honest confession, avoid a judicial inquiry, cross-examination, and all other disagreeable matter."

The house was named and pointed out. I now considered all silence useless ; nay, by the innocence of our meetings I could hope to be still more useful to them than to myself. "Sit down," I cried, and brought him back from the door ; "I will tell you everything, and at the same time lighten your heart and my own ; only one thing I

beg of you : henceforward let there be no doubt about my truthfulness."

I now told the friend the whole course of the affair, at first quietly and composedly, yet the more I called to remembrance and represented to myself the persons, objects, and events, and so many innocent pleasures and alike cheerful enjoyments to be laid before a criminal court, all the more did the most painful feeling increase, so that at last I burst into tears and abandoned myself to uncontrollable passion. The friend of the family, who hoped that even now the real secret might be coming out (for he regarded my grief as a symptom that I was about, against my will, to confess something dreadful), sought to pacify me as well as he could, as for him the discovery was all-important, in that he succeeded partially, but only in so far as I could relate my story scantily. Though satisfied with the innocence of the proceedings, he was to some extent doubtful, and put further questions to me, which again excited me and threw me into grief and rage. At last I assured him that I had nothing further to say, and that I knew well that I had nothing to fear, for I was innocent, recommended by a good house, but that the others could be just as innocent without one's recognising them as such or otherwise favouring them. I declared, at the same time, that if one would not spare them as they would me, pass over their follies, and be willing to pardon their faults, if anything in the least harsh or unjust happened to them, I would do myself a mischief, and nobody should prevent me. About this, too, the friend endeavoured to tranquillise me ; but I did not trust him, and was, when he left me, in a most terrible condition. I now reproached myself with having told the affair and brought all the circumstances to light. I foresaw that our childish actions, our youthful inclinations and confidences, would be interpreted quite differently, and that I might perhaps involve the excellent Pylades in the matter and make him very unhappy. All these ideas pressed vividly one after another upon my soul, sharpened and spurred my distress, so that I did not know what to do for grief, threw myself at full length upon the ground, and moistened the floor with my tears.

I don't know how long I may have lain, when my sister came in, was frightened at my gestures, and did all that she

could to raise me up. She told me that a person connected with the magistracy awaited below with my father the return of the family friend, and after they had been shut up together for some time, the two gentlemen had departed and had talked with each other very well satisfied, and had even laughed, and she thought she had understood the words :—“ It is all right ; the affair is of no importance.”

“ Indeed,” I broke out, “ the affair is of no importance for me—for us ; for I have committed no crime, and if I had, they would manage to help me through, but the others, the others,” I cried—“ who will stand by them ? ”

My sister sought to comfort me circumstantially with the argument that if they were willing to save those of higher rank, a veil must also be cast over the faults of the more lowly. All that did no good. She had scarcely gone away when I again gave way to my grief, and recalled the images of my affection and passion and of the present and possible misfortune. I repeated to myself story after story, saw only misfortune after misfortune, and in particular did not fail to make Gretchen and myself thoroughly wretched.

The friend of the family had ordered me to remain in my room and to have nothing to do with anyone except the family. This was what I wanted, for I found myself best alone. My mother and sister visited me from time to time, and did not fail to assist me powerfully with all kinds of good consolation ; indeed, they even came the second day in the name of my father, who was now better informed, to offer a complete amnesty, which indeed I thankfully accepted ; but I stubbornly refused the proposal that I should go out with him and look at the insignia of the Empire, which were now shown to the curious, and assured them that I wanted to know nothing more of the world nor of the Roman Empire until I was informed how that distressing affair, which for me would have no further consequences, had turned out for my poor acquaintances. They had nothing to say about this, and left me alone. The following day, however, some attempts were made to move me out of the house and to take part in the public solemnities. In vain ! Neither the great gala day, nor what happened on the occasion of so many elevations of rank, nor the public table of the Emperor and King—nothing, in short, could move me. The Elector of the Palatinate might come in order to wait

on both their Majesties ; these might visit the electoral princes ; one might attend the last electoral sitting in order to complete the business in arrears and renew the electoral union—nothing could call me out from my passionate solitude. I let the bells ring for the thanksgiving, the Emperor take himself to the Capuchin church, the electoral princes and Emperor depart, without on that account moving one step from my room. The final cannonading, immoderate as it might be, did not arouse me, and as the smoke of the powder dispersed and the sound died away, all this splendour had vanished from my soul. I now found no satisfaction but in ruminating over my misery and the thousandfold imaginary multiplication of it. My whole power of invention, my poetry and rhetoric, had thrown themselves on this diseased spot, and threatened just by means of this vitality to involve body and soul in an incurable illness. In this melancholy condition nothing seemed worth a wish, nothing worth a desire. An infinite longing, indeed, seized me to know what had happened to my poor friends and my loved one, what had happened on a closer examination, how far they had been involved in those crimes or had been found guiltless. This I depicted to myself in detail in the most various ways, and did not fail to hold them for innocent and truly unfortunate. Soon I wished to see myself free from this uncertainty, and wrote violently threatening letters to the family friend that he should not withhold from me the further course of the affair. Soon I tore them up again from fear of learning my unhappiness quite clearly and of being deprived of the imaginary consolation with which I now alternately tormented and supported myself.

Thus I passed day and night in great unrest, in raving and lassitude, so that at last I felt happy when a bodily illness assailed me with considerable violence, which necessitated calling in the doctor, and they had to think of calming me in every way. They thought this could be done generally by solemnly assuring me that all who were more or less involved in that guilt had been treated with greatest lenience, that my nearest friends, being as good as quite innocent, were dismissed with a slight reprimand, and that Gretchen had withdrawn from the city and had returned to her own home. With this last point they delayed the longest, and I did not take it in good part, for in it I could not discover



a voluntary departure, but only a disgraceful banishment. My bodily and mental condition was not thereby improved, my distress now first really began, and I had time enough to torment myself by picturing the strangest romance of melancholy events and an unavoidably tragic catastrophe.

## BOOK VI

“WHAT one longs for in youth, that one has in age in abundance.”

Thus I was driven alternately to promote and to retard my recovery, and a certain secret vexation was now added to my other sensations ; for I noticed that I was watched—that they did not readily hand me anything that was sealed without observing what effect it produced, whether I kept it secret or whether I laid it down open, and so forth. I conjectured, therefore, that Pylades or one of the cousins, or even Gretchen herself, might have attempted to write to me either to give or receive information. I was now for the first time thoroughly cross in addition to my grief, and had again fresh opportunity for exercising my conjectures and puzzling myself into the strangest bewilderment.

It did not last long before they gave me a special tutor. Fortunately, he was a man whom I loved and valued. He had occupied the post of private tutor in the family of one of our friends ; his former pupil had gone alone to the university. He often visited me in my melancholy situation, and at last nothing seemed more natural than to provide him with a room next to mine, as he was then to employ me, calm me, and, as I could well see, keep an eye on me. As, however, I heartily esteemed him, and had also before confided much to him, only not my affection for Gretchen, I determined all the more to be quite open and frank towards him, for it was quite intolerable for me to live in daily intercourse with anyone and to stand on an uncertain, strained footing with him. I did not therefore delay long, spoke about the affair to him, refreshed myself in narrating and repeating the smallest details of my past happiness, and thereby gained so much that he, like a sensible man, saw that it would be better to make me acquainted with the issue of the story, and that, too, in its details and particulars, so that I might be clear about the whole, and that I could

be persuaded with earnestness and zeal to compose myself, to cast the past behind me, and to begin a new life. At first he confided to me who the other young people of position were who had let themselves be betrayed in the beginning into daring hoaxes, then to frolicsome breaches of police law, and further to swindling and other such dangerous matters. Thus really a small conspiracy had arisen, which unprincipled men had joined, who, by falsification of papers, imitating signatures, had committed several criminal acts, and were preparing still more criminal matters. The cousins, about whom I asked at last impatiently, were quite guiltless ; they were only known to the others generally, but had not been found implicated with them in any way. My client, through whose recommendation to my grandfather they had got on the track, was one of the worst, and had solicited that office principally in order to undertake or be able to conceal certain villainies. After all this, I could not at last restrain myself, and asked what had become of Gretchen, for whom I once for all confessed the greatest affection. My friend shook his head and smiled. "Keep calm," he said ; "the girl has stood the examination well, and has borne off an honourable testimony to that effect. One could find nothing in her which was not good and kind ; the examiners themselves were friendly to her, and could not refuse her retirement from the city, which she wished. That, too, which she made known with regard to you, my friend, does her honour ; I have read her declaration in the secret report myself and seen her signature." "The signature," I exclaimed, "which makes me so happy and unhappy ! What has she then made known ? What has she signed ?" The friend hesitated to answer, but the cheerfulness of his countenance indicated to me that he had nothing dangerous to conceal. "If you will know," he said at last, "when it was a question of you and your intercourse with her, she said quite frankly : 'I can't deny that I have often and gladly seen him, but I have always regarded him as a child, and my affection towards him was truly that of a sister. In many cases I have given him good advice, and instead of stirring him up to an equivocal action, I have prevented him from taking part in mischievous tricks which might have brought him into trouble.'"

The friend continued to make Gretchen speak like a

governess, but I didn't listen to him any longer, for that she declared me in the reports to be a child, I found simply horrible, and considered myself to be at once cured of all passion for her ; indeed, I hastily assured my friend that it was now all over. I also spoke no more of her, mentioned her name no more, yet I could not abandon the evil habit of thinking about her, envisaging her form, her manner, her demeanour, which certainly now appeared to me in quite a different light. I found it intolerable that a girl, at the most a couple of years older than myself, should regard me as a child, when I thought that I counted for a quite sensible and clever youth. Her cold and repelling manner, which formerly had so charmed me, now seemed to me quite repugnant ; the familiarities which she had allowed herself to take with me, but did not permit me to return, were altogether odious. All, however, would still have been right if I, on account of her signing that poetic love-letter, in which she had confessed a formal affection for me, had not been justified in regarding her as a cunning and selfish coquette. Also when disguised as a milliner she no more seemed so innocent, and I turned these annoying reflections over and over by myself until I had entirely stripped her of all her amiable qualities. According to my understanding, I was convinced, and I thought I must disavow her ; but her image !—her image gave me the lie as oft as it hovered before me, which indeed happened often enough.

Nevertheless, this arrow with its barbed hooks was torn out of my heart, and it was a question how to bring to one's aid the inward healing power of youth. I really took courage, and the first thing which was at once put aside was the weeping and raving, which I now regarded as extremely childish. A great step towards improvement ! For I had often half the night through abandoned myself to these sorrows with the greatest violence, so that through tears and sobbing I came at last to a state in which I could scarcely swallow and the pleasure of food and drink had become painful to me, also my breast, which was so nearly concerned, seemed to suffer. The vexation which I had constantly felt about that discovery caused me to banish all weakness ; I found it dreadful that I had sacrificed sleep, and quiet, and health for the sake of a girl who was pleased to regard

me as a babe, and to consider herself with reference to me as a sort of nurse.

These depressing reflections were, as I easily persuaded myself, only to be banished by activity, but what was I to take hold of? I had certainly a good deal to catch up in many things, and to prepare myself in more than one sense for the university, which I was now about to enter; but I cared for nothing, and nothing would succeed with me. Much, indeed, seemed to me already familiar and trivial; for further grounding myself I found neither strength within nor opportunity without, and I let myself by the taste of my good companion be moved to a study which was quite new and strange to me, and for a long time offered me a wide field of information and reflection. My friend began, namely, to make me acquainted with the secrets of philosophy. He had studied under Darjes<sup>1</sup> in Jena, and having a well-ordered mind, he had keenly grasped the connection of that doctrine, and so he now tried to impart it to me, too. But, unfortunately, these things in my brain would not hang together in such a fashion. I asked questions which he promised to answer later; I made demands which he promised to satisfy in the future. Our most important difference, however, was this: I asserted that a special philosophy was not necessary, since it was already completely contained in religion and poetry. This he would not by any means admit, but rather tried to prove to me that these latter must first be based on the former (*i.e.*, philosophy); this I stubbornly denied, and in the course of our conversation at every step found arguments for my opinion. For since in poetry a certain belief in the impossible, in religion just such a belief in the undemonstrable, must find a place, so the philosophers seemed to me to be in a very bad position who would prove and explain both of them in their own field of vision, as this can readily be seen from the history of philosophy, since always one sought a different ground from the other, and at last the sceptic claimed that everything was groundless and useless. Even the history of philosophy, however, which my friend saw himself compelled to work at with me, because I could gather nothing at all from dogmatical discourse, entertained me very much, but

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<sup>1</sup> 1714-91. Professor of Moral Philosophy at Jena.

only in the sense that one doctrine and opinion seemed to me as good as another in so far, namely, as I was capable of entering into it. I was best pleased with the most ancient men and schools, because poetry, religion, and philosophy were completely combined into one ; and I maintained that first opinion of mine with all the more animation when the Book of Job, the Song and Proverbs of Solomon, as well as the lays of Orpheus and Hesiod, seemed to bear a valid witness for it. My friend had taken the smaller work of Brucker as the basis of his discourse, and the further we advanced, the less was I able to make of it. What the first Greek philosophers wanted was not clear to me. Socrates I esteemed as an excellent, wise man, who in his life and death might well be compared with Christ. His disciples, on the other hand, seemed to me to have a great resemblance to the Apostles, who after their Master's death disagreed immediately, when each manifestly recognised only a limited view for the right one. Neither the keenness of Aristotle nor the richness of Plato produced the least fruit in me. For the Stoics, on the other hand, I had already felt some inclination, and now procured Epictetus, whom I studied with much sympathy. My friend unwillingly let me yield to this one-sidedness, from which he could not draw me away ; for, in spite of his manifold studies, he did not know how to bring the main question into a narrow compass. He need only have said to me that in life everything depends on action, that joy and sorrow come of themselves. However, youth must be left its course ; it does not cling to false maxims for long : life soon tears or charms them away again.

The season had become fine ; we often went together into the open air and visited the places of amusement which surrounded the city in great numbers. But just here I felt least comfortable, for I saw the ghosts of the cousins everywhere, and feared to see now here, now there, one of them come forward. Even the most indifferent glances of men were painful to me. I had lost that unconscious happiness of wandering about unknown and unblamed, and of thinking in the greatest crowd of no observer. Now hypochondriacal fancies began to torment me, as if I aroused the attention of people, as though their looks were turned on my demeanour to fix it on their memories, to examine and find fault with it.

I therefore drew my friend into the woods, and while I fled from the monotonous fir trees, I sought those beautiful leafy groves, which certainly do not extend far and wide in the district, but still are always of sufficient compass for a poor wounded heart to hide itself. In the greatest depth of the forest I sought out a solemn spot where the oldest oaks and beeches formed a large nobly shaded space. The ground sloped somewhat, and made the value of the old trunks all the more noticeable. Round this open circle closed the thickest bushes, from which rocks covered with moss peered forth in their might and dignity and made a rapid fall for a well-watered brook.

Scarcely had I compelled my friend hither, who preferred to be in the open country by the stream, among men, when he laughingly assured me that I showed myself to be a true German. He related to me in detail, from Tacitus, how our ancestors found pleasure in the feelings which Nature so splendidly prepares for us in such solitude with no artificial architecture. He had not long been talking of this when I cried out : “ Why does not this precious spot lie in a deeper wilderness ! Why may we not draw a hedge round it to hallow it and ourselves and to separate them from the world ! Certainly there is no more beautiful adoration of the Deity than that which needs no image, which springs up in one’s bosom merely from intercourse with Nature.” What I felt at that time is still present to me ; what I said, I do not know how to recall. But so much is certain, that the indefinite, widely expanding feelings of youth and of uncultivated nations are alone adapted to the sublime, which, when it has to be stirred in us by outward things, without form or moulded into incomprehensible forms, must surround us with a greatness to which we are not equal.

Such a disposition of the soul all men more or less feel, so far as they seek to satisfy this noble necessity in various ways. But as the sublime is easily produced by twilight and night, when forms are blended, so, on the other hand, it is scared away by the day which separates and divides everything, and so must it also be destroyed by every increase of cultivation, if it is not fortunate enough to take refuge with the beautiful and closely unite itself with it, by which these both become immortal and indestructible. The brief moments of such enjoyment were still more shortened for

me by my thoughtful friend ; but when I came back into the world I sought quite in vain among the bright and barren surroundings to reawaken such a feeling within me ; indeed, I could scarcely retain the memory of it. My heart, however, was too much spoiled to be able to calm itself ; it had loved, and the object had been torn from it ; it had lived, and life was for it embittered. A friend who allows it too clearly to be seen that he intends to form you excites no feeling of comfort ; whereas a woman who is forming you, while she seems to spoil you, is adored as a heavenly, joy-bringing being. But that form in which the idea of the beautiful manifested itself to me had vanished into the distance ; it visited me often under the shade of my oak trees, but I could not hold it fast, and I felt a powerful impulse to seek something similar in the distance. I had imperceptibly accustomed, nay, compelled my friend and tutor to leave me alone, for even in my sacred grove those undefined, gigantic feelings were not enough for me. The eye was the organ, before all others, with which I envisaged the world. From childhood I had lived among painters and accustomed myself to look at objects as they do with regard to art. Now, since I was left to myself and to solitude, this gift, half natural, half acquired, made its appearance ; when I looked I saw a picture, and what struck me, what delighted me, I wanted to fix, and I began in a most unskilful fashion to draw according to Nature. In this I was lacking in everything, yet I kept obstinately to it, without any technical means, wishing to imitate the noblest things which presented themselves to my eyes. By this means I certainly acquired a great attention to objects, but I grasped them only as a whole, so far as they produced an effect ; and as little as Nature had destined me to be a descriptive poet, just as little did she wish to give me the capacity of a draughtsman for details ; since, however, this was the only way left to me of expressing myself, I clung to it with so much stubbornness, even with melancholy, that I always continued my labours more keenly the less I saw coming out from them.

I will not deny, however, that a certain element of roguishness mixed with this, for I had observed that if I had chosen for an irksome study a half-shaded old trunk, on the hugely curved roots of which nestled brightly shining ferns



combined with twinkling maiden-hair, my friend, who knew from experience that I should not be free for less than an hour, usually decided to seek out another pleasant little spot with a book. Now nothing disturbed me from following my taste, which was the more active as my paper became endeared to me, as I accustomed myself to see on it not so much what stood upon it, but that which I had been thinking of then at any time or hour. So plants and flowers of the commonest kind form a charming diary for us, for nothing which recalls the memory of a happy moment can be without significance ; and even now it would be hard for me to destroy as worthless many things of the kind which have remained to me from different epochs, because they transport me immediately to those times which I remember with melancholy indeed, yet not unwillingly. But if such drawings could have any interest for themselves, they were indebted for this advantage to the sympathy and attention of my father. He, informed by my tutor that I was gradually becoming reconciled to my condition, and specially had turned myself passionately to drawing from Nature, was very well content with it, partly because he himself attached much importance to drawing and painting, partly because our friend Seekatz had said several times it was a pity that I was not destined for a painter. But here the peculiarities of the father and son again came into conflict, for it was almost impossible for me with my drawing to make use of a good, white, completely clean paper ; grey old leaves, already scribbled on one side, charmed me most, as though my incapacity was afraid of the touchstone of a white ground. Also none of my drawings were quite finished, and how should I even have executed a whole, which I saw indeed with my eyes, but did not understand, and how an individual object, which I certainly knew, but had neither the skill nor patience to follow out ? Really, in this point the pedagogism of my father was to be admired. He asked kindly after my attempts, and drew lines round every incomplete sketch. He wished by this means to compel me to completeness and fullness of detail. The irregular leaves he cut straight, and thus made the beginning of a collection in which hereafter he wished to rejoice at the progress of his son. It was therefore for him in no way unpleasant if my wild, restless disposition sent me roving

about the country ; rather he showed himself content when I only brought some pieces of drawings on which he could exercise his patience and in some degree strengthen his hopes.

No further anxiety was felt of my falling back into my former attachments and connections, and by degrees I was left complete freedom. By chance inducements and in chance society I made many expeditions to the mountains which from my childhood had stood so distant and solemn before me. Thus we visited Hamburg and Kroneberg and ascended the Feldberg, from which the wide view attracted us still farther into the distance. Königstein, too, was not left unvisited ; Wiesbaden, Schwalbach, and its surroundings occupied us for several days ; we reached the Rhine, which, from the heights, we had seen meandering along. Mainz astonished us, but could not captivate the youthful mind, which wandered off into the open country ; we were delighted with the situation of Biberich, and, contented and happy, we took our journey home.

This whole tour, from which my father promised himself many a drawing, might have been almost without fruit ; for what taste, what talent, what surroundings are not required to conceive an extensive landscape as a picture ! Imperceptibly again I was drawn into a narrow compass, in which I found some profit, for I met no ruined castle, no masonry which pointed to antiquity, which I did not think a worthy object and imitate as well as I could. Even the monument of Drusenstein on the ramparts of Mainz I drew with some risk and inconvenience, which every one must experience who wants to bring home some pictorial reminiscences of his travels. Unfortunately, I had again taken with me only the most wretched copying paper, and had crowded several objects unskilfully on one sheet ; but my paternal teacher was not baffled by this ; he cut the sheets apart, he had the parts which belonged to each other mounted by the bookbinders, surrounded the single leaves, and thereby actually compelled me to draw the outlines of different mountains up to the margin, and to fill up the foreground with some weeds and stones.

If his faithful endeavours could not increase my talent, yet this mark of his love of order had a secret influence upon me, which later on manifested itself vigorously in more ways than one.

From such excursions, undertaken partly for pleasure and partly for art, which could be completed in a short time and often repeated, I was again drawn home, and that by a magnet which always worked strongly upon me ; this was my sister. She, only a year younger than myself, had lived my whole conscious period of life with me, and was thus bound to me by the closest ties. To these natural causes was added a forcible motive arising from our domestic condition ; a father, certainly affectionate and well meaning, but severe, who, because inwardly he cherished a very tender heart, externally with incredible consistency assumed a brazen sternness, that he might attain his object of giving his children the best education, building up, regulating, and preserving his well-founded house ; on the other hand, a mother, still almost a child, who first grew up to consciousness with and in her two eldest children ; these three, as they looked at the world with healthy eyes, capable of life, longed for present enjoyment. This antagonism floating over the family increased with years. My father followed out his views unshaken and uninterrupted ; mother and children could not give up their feelings, their demands, and their wishes.

In these circumstances it was natural that brother and sister should cling close to each other and adhere to their mother, that they might at least snatch singly the pleasures forbidden them as a whole. But since the hours of seclusion and toil were very long compared with the moments of recreation and pleasure, especially for my sister, who could never leave the house for so long as I could, the necessity she felt for entertaining herself with me was still sharpened by the feeling of longing with which she accompanied me to a distance.

And so, as in the early years, playing and learning, growth and education, had been completely common to both of us, that we might well have been taken for twins ; so did this mutual intercourse, this confidence, remain during the development of our physical and moral powers. That interest of youth, that amazement at the awakening of sensual impulses, which clothe themselves in mental forms, of mental necessities which clothe themselves in sensual images, all the reflections thereupon which obscure rather than enlighten us as the mist covers over and does not

illuminate the valley from which it is going to rise, the many errors and aberrations which spring therefrom, the brother and sister shared and endured hand in hand, and were the less enlightened over their strange condition, as the nearer they wished to approach one another to clear up their minds, the sacred awe of their close relationship the more forcibly ever kept them apart.

Unwillingly do I mention this in general terms which I undertook years before to set forth, without being able to accomplish it. Since I lost this beloved, incomprehensible being all too soon, I felt sufficient inducement to represent her worth to myself, and so there arose in me the idea of a poetic whole, in which it would have been possible to exhibit her individuality, but I could think of no other form but that of the Richardsonian novels. Only by the minutest detail, by endless particular points which all bear vividly the character of the whole, and while springing from a wonderful depth give some feeling of that depth—only in such a way could one in some measure succeed in communicating a representation of this remarkable personality, for the spring can only be understood while it is flowing. But from this beautiful and pious resolve, as from so many other things, I was drawn away by the tumult of the world, and now nothing remains for me but to call up for a moment the shadow of that blessed spirit, as though by the help of a magic mirror. She was tall, well and delicately built, and had a natural dignity in her demeanour which melted away into a pleasing mildness. The lineaments of her countenance, neither striking nor beautiful, bespoke a being which was not and could not be at unity with itself. Her eyes were not the most beautiful which I have ever seen, but the deepest, behind which one expected the most, and when they expressed any affection, any love, had a brilliancy which was unequalled ; and yet this expression was not exactly tender as that which comes from the heart and at the same time carries with it something of longing and desire ; this expression came from the soul, it was full and rich, seemed only to wish to be giving, not needing to receive.

But what in a way quite specially disfigured her face so that she would often appear really ugly was the fashion of that time, which not only bared the forehead, but did

everything, either accidentally or on purpose, to enlarge it. Since she had the most feminine, purely arched forehead and therewith a pair of strong black eyebrows and prominent eyes, there arose from these circumstances a contrast which, at first sight, if it did not repel every stranger, at least did not attract him. She really felt it, and this feeling became ever more painful as she came to the time of life when the two sexes experience an innocent pleasure in making themselves agreeable to each other.

To no one can his own form be repugnant ; the ugliest as well as the most beautiful has the right of enjoying his own presence, and as kind feeling beautifies, and every one looks into the mirror with kind feeling, so it can be maintained that every one must look at himself with complacency even when he wishes to resist the feeling. Yet my sister had such a decided foundation of good sense that here she could not possibly be blind and silly ; she perhaps knew more clearly than was right that she stood very far behind her female companions in external beauty, without feeling for her consolation that she was infinitely superior to them in internal advantages.

If a woman can be recompensed for the want of beauty, my sister was richly so, by the unlimited confidence, respect, and love which all her female friends bore to her ; they might be older or younger, all cherished the same feelings. A very pleasant society had grouped itself around her, and young men were not lacking who knew how to insinuate themselves ; almost every girl had a man friend ; she only remained without a partner. Indeed, if her exterior being was in some degree repellent, her inner being, which gleamed through it, was rather putting off than attracting ; for the presence of any merit makes others reflect upon themselves. She was keenly alive to this, and did not conceal it from me, and her affection turned all the more strongly to me. The case was singular enough. As confidants to whom one reveals a love-affair actually by sincere sympathy become lovers, nay, grow into rivals and at last transfer the affection to themselves, so was it with us two ; for when my connection with Gretchen was torn asunder, my sister consoled me all the more earnestly as she secretly experienced the satisfaction of being rid of a rival ; and I, too, could not but feel a quiet, half-malicious pleasure when she did me the

justice to assure me that I was the only one who truly loved, understood, and valued her. When now from time to time the sorrow for the loss of Gretchen was renewed and I all at once began to weep, to lament, and behave in a disorderly fashion, so did my despair for my lost one awake in her similar despairing impatience as to what was never possessed, the failures and miscarriages of such youthful attachments, that we both thought ourselves infinitely unhappy, and all the more as in this singular case the confidants could not change themselves into lovers.

Fortunately, however, the marvellous god of Love, who needlessly does so much mischief, here for once intervened beneficially to extricate us all from our embarrassment. I had a good deal of intercourse with a young Englishman who was being educated in Pfeil's pension. He could give a good account of his own language, I practised it with him, and learnt thereby much of his country and nation. For a long time he went in and out at our house without my noticing in him an attachment to my sister, yet he may have been nourishing it in secret, even to passion, for at last it declared itself unexpectedly and at once. She understood him, she valued him, and he deserved it. She had often been the third at our English conversations ; we had both endeavoured to assimilate from his mouth the marvels of the English pronunciation, and thereby accustomed ourselves not only to the peculiarity of its accent and sound, but even to what was most peculiar in the personal qualities of our teacher, so that at last it sounded strange enough when we all seemed to speak as if from one mouth. The trouble he took in the same way to learn so much German from us was not successful, and I think I have remarked that even the little love affair, both in speaking and writing, was carried on in the English language. Both young people were well suited to one another ; he was tall and well built, as she was, only still more slender ; his face, small and compact, might really have been nice if it had not been too much disfigured by smallpox ; his behaviour was calm, precise, one might almost call it dry and cold, but his heart was full of kindness and love, his soul full of generosity, and his attachments as lasting as they were decided and composed. Now this serious pair, who had but lately found each other, were quite strangely distinguished among the

others, who were already better acquainted with one another, of more frivolous character, and careless as to the future, roved about with levity in those relationships which usually pass away as a fruitless prelude to future and more serious ties and very seldom produce a lasting effect upon life.

The fine weather, and the beautiful country did not remain unused by so lively a society ; water picnics were frequently arranged, because these are the most social of all parties of pleasure. Yet, whether we exercised ourselves by water or by land, the individual attracting powers immediately showed themselves ; each couple kept together, and for some men who were not engaged, of whom I was one, there remained either no conversation with the ladies at all or only such as no one would have selected for a day of pleasure. A friend who found himself in like case, and who might have been in want of a partner chiefly for the reason, that with the best humour he was deficient in tenderness, and with much intelligence, that attentiveness without which connections of such a kind are not to be thought of—after often humorously and wittily lamenting his situation, this man promised at the next gathering to make a proposal which would benefit himself and the whole company. And he did not fail to keep his promise, for when we, after a splendid water picnic and a very pleasant walk, reclined on the grass between shady hills, or sat on mossy rocks or the roots of trees, and had cheerfully and happily consumed a rural meal, and our friend saw us all cheerful and in good spirits, he with a waggish dignity commanded us to sit in a semicircle, before which he stepped, and in the following manner began to make an emphatic peroration :—

“ Most worthy friends of both sexes, paired and unpaired.”—From this address it was already clear how necessary it was for a preacher of repentance to come forward and sharpen the conscience of the company. “ One part of my noble friends is paired, and they may find themselves quite happy ; another is unpaired, and they find themselves most miserable, as I can assure you from my own experience, and though the loving couples are here in the majority, I ask them yet to reflect if it is not a social duty to take care of all ? Why do so many of us unite together except to take a mutual interest in each other ? And how can that happen

when in our circle so many small groupings may be seen? I am far removed from intending anything against such fair connections, or even from wishing to disturb them; but everything has its time!—an excellent, great saying, of which nobody thinks when his own amusement is sufficiently provided for.”

He then went on in an ever more lively and festive fashion to compare the social virtues with the tender sentiments.

“The latter,” said he, “can never fail us; we carry them always with us, and every one easily becomes a master in them without any practice; but the former we must seek out, we must take trouble about them, and we may advance in them as much as we will, we have never finished learning them.” Now he went into detail. Many felt themselves hit off, and could not help looking at one another, yet our friend had this privilege, that nothing was taken amiss, and so he could continue without interruption.

“It is not enough to discover deficiencies; indeed, it is wrong to do so, if one does not know at the same time how to give the means for bettering the condition of things. I will not, therefore, my friends, like a preacher in Passion Week, exhort you to repentance and improvement in general, but rather do I wish all the amiable couples the longest and most enduring happiness, and in order to contribute to this with the greatest certainty, I make the proposal of severing and giving up during our social hours these most charming little seclusions. I have already,” he continued, “provided for the carrying out of my project if you approve. Here is a bag in which are the names of the gentlemen; do you now, my fair ones, draw, and be pleased to favour as your servant for a week him whom the lot assigns to you. This is binding only within our circle; as soon as it is broken up, these connections are also broken up, and the heart may decide who shall attend you home.”

A great part of the company was delighted with this address and the way in which it was put forward, and seemed to approve of the idea; some couples, however, looked at each other as if they thought they would not find their account in it; therefore, he called out with humorous vehemence:

“Truly, I am surprised that no one jumps up and, though others delay, approves my proposal, explains its



advantages, and spares me the pain of having to praise myself. I am the oldest among you ; may God forgive me for that ! Already I have a bald head, that is due to my great thinking."

Here he took off his hat. " But I would expose it to view with joy and honour if my lucubrations, which dry up the skin and rob me of my finest ornament, could only be in some measure beneficial to myself and others. We are young, my friends—that is fine ; we shall become older—that is stupid ; we take little offence with each other—that is nice and in accordance with the season. But soon, my friends, the days will come when we shall have much to be displeased at with ourselves ; then let every one see how he comes to terms with himself, but at the same time others will take things ill of us, and indeed for what we shall not understand ; for this we must prepare ourselves, and this shall now happen."

He had delivered the whole speech, but especially the last passage, with the tone and gestures of a Capuchin (preacher), for as he was a catholic, he might have had abundant opportunity of studying the oratory of these fathers. Now he appeared out of breath, wiped his youthful bald head, which really gave him the appearance of a priest, and by these drolleries he put the light-hearted company in such good spirits that every one was curious to hear him further. But instead of continuing, he drew the bag and turned himself to the next lady. " Now for a trial of it," he said ; " the work will do credit to the master. If in a week it doesn't give pleasure, let us give it up and stick to the old plan."

Half willingly, half under compulsion, the ladies drew their tickets, and one easily noticed that during this little affair various passions were in play. Fortunately, it happened that the cheerful-minded were separated, the more serious remained together, and so my sister kept her Englishman, which on both sides they took very kindly of the god of Love and Good Fortune. The new chance-couples were immediately united by the President, their healths were drunk, and to all the more joy was wished as the duration could only be short. Certainly this was the merriest moment that our society had enjoyed for a long time. The young men to whose share no lady had fallen

held now for this week the office of providing for the mind, soul, and body, as our orator expressed himself, but, he thought, specially for the soul, since both of the others already knew how to help themselves. The masters of ceremonies, who wished at once to do themselves credit, quietly brought into play some quite pretty new games, prepared at some distance a supper which we had not counted on, and illuminated the yacht on our return at night, though in the bright moonlight there was no necessity for it; but they excused themselves by saying that it was quite suitable to the new social regulation to outshine the tender glances of the heavenly moon by terrestrial lights. The moment we reached the land, our Solon exclaimed, "Ite, missa est!" Each one now handed out of the vessel the lady who had fallen to him by lot, and gave her over to her proper partner while he received his own in exchange.

At our next meeting this weekly regulation was established for the summer, and the lots were drawn again. There was no question but that by this pleasantry a new and unexpected turn was given to the company, and every one was stimulated to bring to light whatever wit and grace was in him to pay court to his temporary fair one in the most pressing manner, since he could trust himself, at least for one week, to have a sufficient store of complaisance.

We had scarcely arranged this when, instead of thanking our orator, we reproached him because he had kept the best part of his speech—the end—to himself. He protested that the best part of a speech was persuasion, and he who did not aim at persuasion should make no speech, for as to conviction, that was a precarious affair. When, nevertheless, we gave him no rest, he began at once a Capuchinade more grotesque than ever, perhaps, for the very reason that he intended to speak of the most serious subjects. For he carried out the proposition with texts from the Bible which were not to the point, with parables which did not fit, with allusions which illustrated nothing, that he who does not know how to conceal his passions, affections, wishes, projects, and plans, comes to nothing in the world, but will be disturbed and made a joke of in every end and corner; but especially if one would be happy in love, one must be diligent in keeping it the profoundest secret.

This thought ran through the whole without exactly a single word of it being said. If you want to get an idea of this singular man, one must consider that he was born with much ability, had cultivated his talents, and particularly his acuteness, in the school of the Jesuits, and had acquired a great knowledge of the world and of men, but only from the bad side. He was about twenty-two years of age, and would willingly have made me a proselyte of his contempt for mankind ; but this would not do with me, for I had always a great desire to be good and to find others so. Meanwhile, he drew my attention to many things. To complete the personnel of every cheerful society an actor is necessary, who feels pleasure when the others, to enliven many an indifferent moment, may direct the arrows of their wit against him. If he is not merely a stuffed Saracen, like those on whom the knights practised their lances in mock battles, but himself understands how to skirmish, to rally and to challenge, to wound slightly and to recover himself again, and, while he seems to expose himself, to give others a thrust home, nothing more agreeable can be found. Such a one we possessed in our friend Horn, whose name already gave rise to all kinds of jokes, and who, on account of his small size, was always called Hörnchen. He was, in fact, the smallest in the company, of a stout but pleasing form ; a snub nose, a somewhat distorted mouth, small sparkling eyes, made up a dark brown countenance which always seemed to invite laughter. His small compact skull was thickly covered with curly black hair, his beard prematurely grey, which he would like to have let grow that, as a comic mask, he might keep the company laughing. Besides, he was neat and nimble, but maintained that he had bandy legs, which was granted because he would have it so, for about it many a joke arose ; for since he was sought after as a very good dancer, he reckoned it among the peculiarities of women that they always liked to see bandy legs on the floor. His cheerfulness was imperturbable and his presence at every gathering indispensable. We both kept the more closely together, since he was to follow me to the university ; and he well deserves that I should mention him with all honour, as he held fast to me for many years with infinite love, loyalty, and patience.

By my facility in rhyming and in winning from common

objects their poetical side, he allowed himself to be seduced to similar labour. Our little social excursions, pleasure parties, and the incidents which arose from them, we trimmed up poetically, and so by the description of one event, a new event always arose. But because such social jests generally degenerate into ridicule, and our friend Horn with his burlesque representations did not always keep within proper bounds, much vexation arose, which, however, could soon be softened down and effaced. Thus he tried his skill also in a kind of poetry which was very much the order of the day—namely, the comic heroical poem. Pope's "Rape of the Lock" had awakened many imitations; Zachariä cultivated this poetic art on German soil, and it pleased every one, because the ordinary subject of it was some awkward fellow of whom the genii made game while they favoured the better one.

It is not surprising, yet it awakens surprise, when one notices on reflecting about a literature, especially the German, how a whole nation cannot again get free from a subject which has once been given and happily treated in a certain form, but will have it repeated in every manner, till at last the original is covered up and stifled by the heaps of imitations.

The heroic poem of my friend was a proof of this remark. At a great sledging party a clumsy man is assigned to a lady who does not like him; one misfortune after another befalls, comically enough, such as can happen on such an occasion, till at last, when he asks for the sledge driver's right (a kiss), he falls from the back seat, for just then, as was natural, the spirits tripped him up. The fair one seizes the reins and drives home alone. A favoured friend receives her and triumphs over the pretended rival. As to the rest, it was very prettily contrived that the four different spirits should worry him little by little, till at last the gnomes hoist him completely out of the saddle. The poem, written in Alexandrines, based on a true story, pleased our little society very much, and we were convinced that it might well be compared with the "Walpurgisnacht" of Löwen, or with the "Renommist"<sup>1</sup> of Zachariä.

While now our social pleasures demanded only one

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<sup>1</sup> "The fighting student."

evening and the preparations for them only a few hours, I had enough time to read and, as I thought, to study. To please my father, I diligently repeated the smaller work of Hopp, and could stand an examination in it forwards and backwards, by which means I made myself complete master of the main contents of the Institutes. But a restless thirst for knowledge drove me further. I came upon the history of ancient literature, and from that upon an encyclopædism, while I ran through Gessner's "Isagoge" and Morhov's "Polyhistor," and thereby gained a general idea how many strange things might have happened in learning and life. By this persistent and rapid industry, continued day and night, I rather bewildered than cultivated myself; but I lost myself in a still greater labyrinth when I found Bayle in my father's library, and plunged deep into him.

But a leading conviction which was continually revived in me was the importance of the ancient languages, since from this literary jumble it was continually forced upon me that in them were preserved all the models of oratory and at the same time everything else of worth which the world has ever possessed. Hebrew as well as biblical studies retired into the background, and Greek likewise, since my knowledge of it did not extend beyond the New Testament. I therefore clung more zealously to Latin, the masterpieces of which lie nearer to us, and which, besides the splendid original productions, offer us the remaining wealth of all ages in translations and the work of the greatest scholars. I therefore read much in this language, and with great ease, and imagined that I understood the authors, because I missed nothing of the literal sense. Indeed, I was very much annoyed when I heard that Grotius had arrogantly declared that "he did not read Terence as boys do." Fortunate limitations of youth! nay, of men in general, that they can at every moment of their existence fancy themselves complete, and inquire neither after the true nor the false, neither after the lofty nor the deep, but merely after that which is suited to them.

So I had learnt Latin, like German, French, and English, only from practice, without rules and without comprehension. Whoever knows the condition of school instruction at that time will not find it strange that I skipped grammar as well as rhetoric; everything seemed to me to go naturally; I

retained the words, their forms, and inflections in my ear and mind, and made use of the language with ease in writing and chattering.

Michaelmas, the time when I was to go to the university, approached, and my mind was excited quite as much about my life as about my learning. An aversion from my native city was ever becoming clearer to me. By Gretchen's removal the heart had been broken out of the boyish and youthful plant ; it wanted time to bud out again from its sides and overcome the first injury by a new growth. My wanderings through the streets had ceased ; I now, like other people, only went the ways which were necessary. To Gretchen's quarter of the city I never went again, not even in the vicinity, and as my old walls and towers disgusted me, so did the constitution of the city displease me ; everything which formerly seemed so worthy of honour now appeared in ill-formed shapes. As grandson of the Mayor, the secret defects of such a republic did not remain unknown to me, still less, as children feel a quite special surprise and are excited to active investigations when something which they have hitherto revered becomes in some manner a matter of suspicion to them. The fruitless vexation of upright men, in opposition to those who are to be gained or even bribed by factions, became only too clear to me. Every injustice I hated beyond measure, for children are all moral rigorists. My father, who was concerned in the affairs of the city only as a private citizen, expressed himself with very lively indignation over much that had miscarried ; and did I not see him, after so many studies, toils, travels, and varied cultivation, finally leading a solitary life between his four walls, such as I could never wish for myself ? This lay as a horrible burden on my mind, from which I did not know how to free myself, except by a quite different plan of life from that which had been marked out for me. In thought I threw aside my legal studies and devoted myself solely to languages, antiquities, to history, and all that flows from them.

At all times certainly the poetic imitation of what I was conscious in myself, in Nature, and in others afforded me the greatest pleasure. I did it with ever-increasing facility, because it came by instinct, and no criticism had led me astray ; and when I did not altogether feel confidence in

my productions, I could well look upon them as defective, but not as altogether to be rejected. If this or that was censured in them, my conviction still remained to me in private that I should gradually improve, and that some time I might be honourably named with Hagedorn, Gellert, and other such men. But such a destination seemed to me altogether too empty and inadequate ; I wished to devote myself with zeal to those fundamental studies, and while I thought to advance myself more rapidly in my own works by a more thorough insight into antiquity, to qualify myself for a university professorship, which seemed the most desirable thing for a young man who intended to cultivate himself and to contribute to the cultivation of others.

With these opinions I always had my eye on Göttingen. My whole confidence rested on men like Heyne, Michaelis, and so many others ; my most ardent wish was to sit at their feet and to attend to their teaching. But my father remained immovable. Although some family friends, who were of my opinion, tried to influence him, he persisted that I must go to Leipsic. I was now decided, contrary to his views and wishes, to enter upon a line of studies and of life for myself by way of self-defence. The obstinacy of my father, who, without knowing it, opposed himself to my plans, strengthened me in my impiety, so that I had no scruple about listening to him by the hour while he described and repeated the course of studies and of life which I should go through in the universities and in the world.

As all my hopes for Göttingen were cut off, I now turned my eyes towards Leipsic. There Ernesti appeared to me as a bright light, also Morus aroused much confidence. I planned for myself in private an opposition course, or rather I built a castle in the air on fairly solid ground ; and it seemed to me quite romantically honourable to mark out my own path of life, which appeared less visionary, as Griesbach had already made great progress in a similar way and was praised for it by every one. The secret joy of a prisoner when he has unbound his fetters and filed through the bars of the grating of his prison can scarcely have been greater than was mine when I saw the days passing away and October approaching ; the inclement time of the year, the bad roads, of which every one had something to tell, did not alarm me. The thought of having to pay my

footing in a strange place, and in winter, did not make me gloomy ; suffice it to say, I only saw my present circumstances as dismal, and represented to myself the other unknown world as light and cheerful. There I formed my dreams, to which I clung exclusively, and promised myself nothing but happiness and contentment in the future.

Though I kept these projects closely a secret from every one, I could not conceal them from my sister, who, after she had at first been very much alarmed, was finally calmed when I promised to send after her, so that she could enjoy with me the brilliant position which I was to obtain, and share my comfort with me.

Michaelmas came at last, so longingly awaited, when I set out with delight with the bookseller Fleischer and his wife (whose maiden name was Triller), who was going to visit her father in Wittenberg, and I left behind me with indifference the worthy city where I was born and bred, as though I wished never to set foot in it again.

Thus at certain epochs children part from parents, servants from their masters, protégés from their patrons, and such an attempt to stand on one's own feet, to make oneself independent, to live for oneself, whether it succeed or not, is always in accordance with the will of nature.

We had driven out through the All Saints Gate, and had soon left Hanau behind us, when we came to regions which excited my attention by their novelty, though at this time of year they offered little that was pleasing. A continual rain had completely spoiled the roads, which, generally speaking, were not in such a good state as we find them now. However, I had to thank this damp weather for the sight of a natural phenomenon which may well be very rare, for I have never seen anything like it again, nor have I heard that others had observed it. We were driving, namely, at night between Hanau and Gelnhausen up a rising ground, and we wished, though it was dark, to go on foot there rather than to expose ourselves to the danger and difficulty of that part of the road. All at once, in a ravine on the right-hand side of the way, I saw a sort of amphitheatre wonderfully illuminated. There were innumerable little lights gleaming in a funnel-shaped space in step-fashion over one another, and they shone so brilliantly that the eye was dazzled by them. But what still more confused the



sight was that they did not keep still, but jumped about here and there, as well from above downwards as vice versa, in all directions. Most of them, however, remained stationary and glittered away. It was with the greatest unwillingness that I suffered myself to be called off from this spectacle, which I could wish to have examined more closely. On questioning the postillion, he indeed knew nothing of the phenomenon, but said that there was an old stone quarry in the neighbourhood, the cavity of which was filled with water. Whether this was a pandemonium of will-o'-the-wisps or a company of shining creatures, I will not decide.

Through Thuringia the roads became yet worse, and, unfortunately, at nightfall our carriage stuck fast in the vicinity of Auerstädt. We were removed from all mankind, and did all we could to work ourselves out. I did not fail to exert myself with zeal, and may thereby have overstrained the ligaments of my chest, for soon afterwards I felt a pain which disappeared and returned and did not leave me entirely for many years.

Yet on that same night, as if I had been destined for alternate good and bad luck, after an unexpectedly fortunate incident, I was to experience an irritating vexation. In Auerstädt we met a married couple of superior position, who had been delayed by a similar accident and arrived late—a fine-looking, distinguished man in his best years, with a very handsome wife. They politely induced us to sup with them, and I felt very happy when the excellent lady addressed a friendly word to me. When I was sent out to hurry up the soup we were expecting, not being accustomed to the loss of rest and the fatigues of travel, I was overcome by such a desire for sleep that I actually fell asleep while walking, and came back into the room with my hat on my head without noticing that the others were saying grace, placed myself with quiet unconsciousness behind the chair, and never dreamt that by my behaviour I had come to disturb their devotions in a very amusing way. Mme Fleischer, who was not lacking in intelligence or wit or tongue, entreated the strangers before they sat down not to find anything astonishing which they might see here; for their young fellow-traveller had a predisposition to the Ouakers, who thought they could not better honour God

and the King than by keeping their hat on. The handsome lady, who could not refrain from laughing, looked handsomer than ever in consequence, and I would have given everything in the world not to have been the cause of a merriment which was so admirably becoming to her countenance. I had, however, scarcely laid aside my hat, when these people, according to their polished manners, at once dropped the joke, and with the best wine from their liqueur case completely extinguished sleep, ill-behaviour, and the memory of all past troubles.

When I arrived in Leipsic it was just the time of the fair, from which I derived especial pleasure ; for I saw here before me the continuation of a condition of things belonging to my native city, well-known wares and traders ; only in other places and in a different order. I went through the market and the booths with much interest, but especially my attention was attracted by those inhabitants of Eastern countries, the Poles and Russians in their strange garments, but, above all, the Greeks, whose handsome forms and dignified costume I often went to see for pleasure. This lively bustle was, however, soon over, and now the city itself came before me with its handsome, lofty, and symmetrical buildings. It made a very good impression on me, and I cannot deny that it had, above all, something imposing, but particularly in the silent moments of Sundays or holidays, and when in the moonlight the streets were half in shadow, half illuminated, they often invited me to nocturnal walks.

Meantime this new state of things did not satisfy me when compared with that to which I was accustomed. Leipsic recalls to the spectator no time of antiquity ; it belongs to a new, recently past period, bearing witness to commercial activity, comfort, and riches, which announces itself to us in these monuments. Yet quite to my taste were the huge-looking buildings, which, fronting two streets and embracing a citizen-world within the large courtyards built round them, are like large castles, nay, half-towns. In one of these strange places I settled myself down, and indeed in the Bombshell Tavern, between the old and the new Newmarket. A couple of pleasant rooms, looking out on the courtyard, which on account of the thoroughfare was not without animation, were occupied by the bookseller Fleischer during the fair, and by myself for the rest of the

time at a moderate price. As fellow-lodger I found a theological student who was well grounded in his faculty, a sound thinker, but poor, and suffered with his eyes, which caused him great anxiety for the future. He had brought this evil upon himself by inordinate reading till the latest dusk, and even by moonlight, to save a little oil. Our old landlady showed herself kind to him, always friendly to me, and careful for us both.

I now hurried with my letter of introduction to Hofrath Böhme, who, as a pupil of Marcov, now his successor, taught history and public law. A little, thick-set, lively man received me kindly enough and introduced me to his wife. Both of them, as well as the other persons on whom I called, gave me the best hopes as to my future residence, yet at first I let no one know my secret design, though I could scarcely wait for the favourable moment when I should declare myself free from jurisprudence and bound to the study of the classics. I waited prudently until the Fleischers had departed, so that my intention should not be too quickly betrayed to my family. But I then went without delay to Hofrath Böhme, to whom, before all, I thought I must confide the matter, and declared to him my intention with much logical consistency and boldness of speech. But I did not find at all a good reception of my proposal. As historian and professor of Public Law, he had a declared hatred for everything that savoured of the belles-lettres. Unfortunately, he did not stand on the best terms with those who cultivated them, and Gellert especially, in whom I unskilfully enough had expressed much confidence, he could not endure. To direct a faithful student to those men while he deprived himself of one, and especially under such circumstances, seemed to him quite inadvisable. He therefore gave me a severe lecture at once, in which he protested that he could not permit such a step without the permission of my parents, even if he approved of it himself, which in this case he did not. He then passionately inveighed against philology and the study of languages, but still more against poetical exercises, which I had indeed allowed to peep out in the background. At last he concluded that if I wished to approach more closely to the study of the ancients, it could be done much better by the way of jurisprudence. He brought to my recollection many elegant jurists, such as

Eberhard, Otto, and Heineccius, promised me heaps of gold from Roman antiquities and the history of the law, and showed me clear as the sun that I should here be taking no roundabout way if, later on, I should think of carrying out that plan after more mature consideration and with the consent of my parents. He begged me in a friendly manner to think the matter over again and open my mind to him soon, as it was necessary to decide at once in view of the impending commencement of the lectures. It was certainly very nice of him not to press me on the spot. His arguments and the weight with which he advanced them had already convinced my pliant youth, and I now first saw the difficulties and doubtfulness of a matter which I had in private pictured to myself as so feasible. Shortly afterwards Frau Hofrath Böhme invited me to see her. I found her alone. She was no longer young, and was very ailing, infinitely gentle and tender, and made a decided contrast to her husband, whose good nature was even blustering. She led me to the conversation which her husband had lately had with me, and once more placed the matter before me in all its bearings in such a kindly, friendly, and sensible manner that I could not refrain from giving way ; the few reservations on which I insisted were also agreed upon by the other side.

After that her husband regulated my studies ; I was to hear lectures on philosophy, history of law, the Institutes, and some other matters. I was pleased with this, yet carried my point so as to attend Gellert's history of literature over Stockhausen (*i.e.*, with Stockhausen as a textbook) and his "Practicum" <sup>1</sup> besides.

The reverence and love which Gellert enjoyed from all young people was extraordinary. I had already called on him, and been received in a kindly way. Not tall of stature, delicate but not lank, soft rather mournful eyes, a very beautiful forehead, an aquiline nose not too much so, a fine mouth, a countenance of a pleasing oval—everything contributed to make his presence pleasant and desirable. It cost some trouble to reach him. His two *Famuli* appeared like priests who guard a sanctuary, access to which is not allowed to every one nor at all times ; and such a precaution was very necessary, for he would have sacrificed his whole

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<sup>1</sup> Exercises in Latin and German.

day if he had been willing to receive and satisfy all the people who wanted to approach him in confidence.

At first I attended my lectures keenly and faithfully, but the philosophy would not enlighten me at all. In logic it seemed to me extraordinary that I should have to pull about, isolate, and, as it were, destroy those operations of the mind which from my youth up I had performed with the greatest of ease in order to see the right use of the same. Of the absolute, of the world, and of God, I thought I knew about as much as the lecturer himself, and in more places than one there seemed to be a decided hitch. Yet all went on in a tolerable order till towards Shrovetide, when in the vicinity of Professor Winkler's house on the Thamar Square, just at the hour (of lecture), the most delicious pancakes came hot out of the pan, which made us so late that our notebooks became disordered, and the end of them, towards the spring, melted away with the snow and was lost.

With the lecturer on jurisprudence it was soon quite as bad ; for I already knew just as much as the professor thought good to communicate to us. My obstinate industry in writing down the lecture at first was gradually paralysed, for I found it extremely boring to note down once more what I had oft repeated to my father partly by question, partly by answer, often enough to retain it for ever in my memory. The harm which is done when young people at school are advanced too far in many things was afterwards manifested still more when time and attention were broken off from exercises in languages and a foundation in what are, properly speaking, preliminary studies, in order to apply them to so-called "Realities," which dissipate more than they cultivate if they are not taught methodically and thoroughly.

I here mention, by the way, another evil by which students are much embarrassed. Professors, like other men in office, cannot all be of the same age ; but when the younger ones teach only in order to learn, and further, if they have good brains, they anticipate their age, and acquire their own cultivation altogether at the cost of their hearers, since these are not instructed in that which they actually require, but in that which the professor finds necessary to work at for himself. Among the oldest professors, on the contrary, many are for a long time stationary ; on the whole, they

deliver only fixed views, and with regard to details, much which time has already condemned as useless and false. From both these arises a sad conflict, in which young minds are dragged hither and thither and which can scarcely be set right by the professors of middle age, who, though sufficiently instructed and cultivated, always feel within themselves an active endeavour after knowledge and reflection. Now, as in this way I learned to know much more than I could digest, whereby a constantly increasing discomfort was forced upon me, also I had from my life many small unpleasantnesses, as one must always pay one's footing, when one changes one's place and enters into new conditions. The first thing that the ladies complained about in me related to my dress, for I had come from home to the university somewhat strangely equipped.

My father, who detested nothing so much as when anything happened to no purpose, when anyone did not know how to make use of his time, or found no opportunity for turning it to account, carried his economy of time and abilities so far that nothing gave him greater pleasure than to kill two birds with one stone.<sup>1</sup> He therefore never had a servant who could not be useful in the house for something else. Now, as he had always written everything with his own hand and later, had the convenience of dictating to that young friend of the family, so he also found it most advantageous to have tailors as servants, who were obliged to employ their time well, as they had not only to make their own liveries, but also clothes for my father and the children, and to do all the mending. My father himself took trouble to have the best cloths and stuff, as he procured his wares at the fairs from foreign merchants and laid them up in store ; as I can still well remember that he always visited the Herren from Lowenicht of Aix-la-Chapelle, and from my earliest youth made me acquainted with these and other eminent merchants. Care was also taken for the excellence of the stuff, and there was a sufficient stock of different kinds of cloth, serge, Göttingen stuff, as well as the necessary lining, so that, as far as the materials were concerned, we could well let ourselves be seen. But the cut spoiled almost everything ; for if one of these domestic tailors was in any

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<sup>1</sup> Literally, "to strike two flies with one flapper."

way a clever fellow at sewing and making up a coat which had been cut out in a masterly fashion, he now had also to cut out the dress himself, and this did not always succeed to perfection. In addition to this, my father kept everything which belonged to his clothing very well and neatly, and preserved it more than used it for many years ; thus he had a predilection for certain old cuts and trimmings, whereby our dress sometimes acquired a strange appearance.

In the same way also my wardrobe, which I took with me to the university, was furnished ; it was very complete and fine looking, and there was even a laced dress among the rest. Already accustomed to this kind of costume, I thought myself sufficiently well dressed, but it did not last long before my lady friends, first by gentle raillery, then by sensible remonstrances, convinced me that I looked as if I had been dropped down from another world. Though I felt much vexation at this, I did not at first see how I could help myself. But when Herr von Masuren, the favourite poetical country squire, once entered the theatre in a similar costume, and was heartily laughed at more on account of his outer than his inner lack of taste, I took courage and ventured at once to exchange my whole wardrobe for a new-fashioned one, suited to the place, by which, however, it shrunk considerably.

After this trial was surmounted, a new one made its appearance which for me was much more unpleasant, because it concerned a matter which one does not so easily put off and exchange. I had been born and bred in the Upper German dialect, and though my father was always studious of a certain purity of speech, and from youth up made us children attentive to what one really calls defects of that idiom and had prepared us for a better kind of speaking, I yet retained many deeper-seated peculiarities, which, because their *naïveté* pleased me, I brought out with pleasure, and thus every time I used them I drew down upon myself a severe reprimand from my new fellow-townsmen. The Upper German, and perhaps chiefly he who lives by the Rhine and Main (for great rivers have, like the seacoast, always something animating about them), expresses himself much in similes and allusions, and with a native, common-sense aptitude makes use of proverbial sayings. In both cases he is often blunt, yet when one sees the object of the expression, it is always appropriate ; only, to be sure,

something may often slip in which proves itself offensive to a more delicate ear.

Every province loves its own dialect, for it is, properly speaking, the element in which the soul draws its breath. But every one knows with what obstinacy the Meisnian dialect has managed to domineer over the rest, and even for a time to exclude them. We have suffered for many years under this pedantic tyranny, and only by frequent struggles have all the provinces again established themselves in these old rights. What a lively young man had to endure under this continual tutoring anyone will easily understand who considers that, with the pronunciation, which one at last consents to alter, has to be sacrificed at the same time the way of thinking, the imagination, feeling, and native character. And this intolerable demand was made by cultivated men and women whose convictions I could not adopt, whose injustice I seemed to feel, though I could not make it clear to myself. I was forbidden to make allusions to pithy biblical texts, as well as the use of the honest-hearted expressions from the Chronicles. I was to forget that I had read the "Geiler Von Kaisersberg," and dispense with the use of proverbs, which, however, instead of much fiddle-faddle, just hit the nail on the head—all this which I had appropriated with youthful ardour I was to do without ; I felt myself paralysed to the core, and scarcely knew any more how I was to express myself about the commonest things. Then I heard that one should speak as one writes, and write as one speaks ; while to me speaking and writing seemed once for all two different things, each of which might well maintain its own right. And I had yet to hear much in the Meisnian dialect which on paper would not have appeared particularly good.

Every one who perceives in this the influence which cultivated men and women, the learned, and other persons who take pleasure in refined society exercise over a young student, would at once be convinced that we were in Leipsic, if it had not been mentioned. Each of the German universities has a special character, for, as no universal culture can pervade our fatherland, so every place keeps to its own fashion and carries out, even to the last, its characteristic peculiarities ; this, too, is true of the universities. In Jena and Halle roughness had been carried to the highest pitch ;



bodily strength, skill in fencing, the wildest self-defence was there the order of the day ; and such a condition can only be maintained and propagated by the most common rioting. The relation of the students to the inhabitants of those towns, different as it might be, nevertheless agreed in this, that the wild stranger had no respect for the citizen and regarded himself as a peculiar being privileged to all kinds of freedom and insolence. On the other hand, in Leipsic a student could scarcely be otherwise than polite as soon as he wished to stand on any sort of footing with the rich and highly well-bred inhabitants. All politeness, indeed, when it does not present itself as the flowering of a great and comprehensive mode of life, must appear limited, stationary, and, from certain points of view, perhaps absurd ; and so those wild huntsmen from the Saale<sup>1</sup> thought they had a great superiority over the tame sheep on the Pleisse.<sup>2</sup> Zachariä's "Renommist" will always remain a precious document from which the manner of life and thought of that time stands out visibly, as in general his poems must be welcome to every one who wants to form for himself an idea of the condition of the social life at that time, which was certainly feeble, but amiable on account of its innocence and child-like simplicity.

All manners which arise from the given relations of a common existence are indestructible, and in my time many things still reminded us of Zachariä's epic poems. Only one of our fellow-academicians thought himself rich and independent enough to snap his fingers at public opinion. He drank acquaintance with all the hackney coachmen, whom he allowed to sit inside the carriage as if they were gentlemen, and himself drove from the box, and thought it a great joke to upset them occasionally, and managed to compensate them for their smashed vehicles as well as for the occasional bruises ; in other respects he did no one any harm, but only seemed to despise the public *en masse*. Once on a most beautiful promenade day he and a comrade of his possessed themselves of the donkeys of the miller in St Thomas Square ; they rode, well dressed, in shoes and stockings, with the greatest solemnity round the city, stared

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<sup>1</sup> River on which Halle is built.

<sup>2</sup> River which flows by Leipsic.

at by all the promenaders with whom the Glacis was swarming. When some sensible persons remonstrated with him on the subject, he assured them, quite unembarrassed, that he only wanted to see how the Lord Christ might have looked in a similar case. Yet he found no imitators and few companions.

For the student of some wealth and position had every reason to show himself attentive to the mercantile class and to occupy himself more skilfully with outward forms, as the colony<sup>1</sup> exhibited a model of French manners. The professors, well to do through their own property and good livings, were not dependent on their scholars, and many subjects of the state, educated at the Government schools or the gymnasia, and hoping for preferment, did not venture to break loose from traditional custom. The neighbourhood of Dresden, the attention paid to us from thence, the true piety of the superintendent of the course of study, could not remain without a moral, nay, a religious influence.

At first I did not find this mode of life unpleasant ; my letters of introduction had introduced me into good families, whose circle of relatives also received me well ; but since I had soon to feel that society had much to object to in me, and that after I had dressed myself in their fashion, was obliged to talk according to their tongue, and could yet clearly see that, on the other hand, I was little benefited by the instruction and mental improvement which I had promised myself from my residence at the university, so I began to be idle and to neglect the social duties of calls and other such attentions, and I should have withdrawn still sooner from all such connections had not awe and respect held me to Hofrath Böhme, and confidence and affection to his wife. The husband, unfortunately, had not the happy gift of intercourse with young people, of winning their confidence and guiding them for the moment according to their requirements. When I visited him I never got any good from it ; his wife, on the other hand, showed a genuine interest in me. Her poor health kept her constantly in the house. Many an evening she invited me to her, and knew how to direct and improve me in many little external

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<sup>1</sup> Large part derived from the Huguenots, who settled there after the revocation of the edict of Nantes.

particulars ; my manners were good indeed, but I did not possess knowledge of etiquette. Only one single female friend spent the evenings with her, but she was more domineering and pedantic, and so I did not like her at all, and often, out of defiance to her, I renewed again those unmannerly ways from which the other had already weaned me. Nevertheless, they exercised patience with me, taught me piquet, *l'Hombre*, and similar games, the knowledge and practice of which are regarded as indispensable in society.

But that in which Frau Böhme had the greatest influence over me was in regard to taste, doubtless in a negative way, yet one in which she agreed perfectly with the critics. The Gottsched<sup>1</sup> waters had inundated the German world with a veritable flood, which threatened to rise up even over the highest mountains ; until such a flood subsides, until the mud dries, a long time is required ; and as in any epoch there are a number of imitative poets, so the imitation of what is shallow and watery produced such a chaos, of which now scarcely an idea remains.

To find out that trash was trash was then the greatest thought, yea, the triumph of the critics of that time. Whoever possessed any common sense, was superficially acquainted with the ancients, and somewhat more nearly with the moderns, thought himself already provided with a standard which he could apply everywhere. Frau Böhme was a cultivated woman who opposed all that was trivial, weak, and commonplace ; she was, besides, the wife of a man who lived on bad terms with poetry, and would not allow that to pass which she perhaps might have approved. She listened now to me certainly with patience for some time when I took upon myself to recite to her verses or prose from special poets, already standing in good repute, for then, as formerly, I retained everything by heart which pleased me in any degree ; but her complaisance did not last long. The first whom she quite outrageously abused were the poets after the fashion of Weisse, who just then were often quoted with the greatest applause and had particularly delighted me. When I looked at the matter more closely I could not say she was wrong. On several occasions, too, I had ventured

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<sup>1</sup> Influence of Gottsched on German literature.

to present some of my own poems, anonymously however, but they fared no better than the rest of the company ; and so in a short time the beautifully variegated meadows at the foot of the German Parnassus, where I was so fond of luxuriating, were mercilessly mowed down, and I was ever compelled to toss about the drying hay myself, and to mock at that as lifeless which, a short time before, had given me such lively joy. To the help of her instructions, without knowing it, came Professor Morus, an uncommonly gentle and friendly man, whose acquaintance I made at the table of Hofrath Ludwig, and who received me in a very kind way when I asked for the privilege of calling on him. Now, while I made inquiries of him about antiquity, I did not conceal from him what pleased me among the moderns, as he then spoke about such things with more calmness than Frau Böhme, but, what was still worse, with more profundity ; and he thus opened my eyes at first to my greatest vexation, but afterwards to my surprise, and at last to my edification.

Besides this came the "Jeremiads," with which Gellert in his "Practicum" was accustomed to warn us. He wished only for prose essays, and always criticised these first. Verses he treated as a melancholy addition, and what was worst, even my prose found little favour in his eyes ; for I was accustomed, after my old fashion, always to lay as the foundation a little romance, which I loved to work out in the form of letters. The subjects were impassioned, the style went beyond ordinary prose, and the contents probably did not show a very deep knowledge of mankind in the author ; and so I was very little favoured by our professor, though he looked through my labours as well as those of others, corrected with red ink, and here and there added a moral remark.

Many pages of this kind, which I kept with pleasure for a long time, have, unfortunately, in the course of years at last disappeared from my papers.

If elderly people wish to proceed in a proper pedagogic manner, they should neither forbid nor render disagreeable to a young man anything which gives him pleasure, whatever it may be, unless at the same time they have something else to put in its place or know how to find a substitute. Every one protested against my tastes and inclinations, and,

on the other hand, what they recommended to me, lay either so far from me that I could not perceive its advantages, or stood so close to me that I did not consider it in the least better than what was censured. I therefore became thoroughly perplexed on the subject, and had promised myself the best results from Ernesti's lecture on Cicero's "*De Oratore*." I learnt something, indeed, in this lecture, but about that, however, which principally concerned me, I was not enlightened. I demanded a standard of judgment, and thought I perceived that nobody possessed it ; for no one agreed with another, even when they brought forward examples ; and where were we to get a judgment, when people managed to reckon up so much that was blameworthy against a man like Wieland, who, in his amiable writings, completely captivated us younger folk ?

Amid this manifold distraction and dissipation of my being and my studies, it happened that I took my dinner at Hofrath Ludwig's. He was a medical man, a botanist, and his society, apart from Morus, consisted of doctors just beginning or completing their studies. In these hours I heard no other conversation but about medicine or natural history, and my imagination was drawn off to quite a different field. I heard mentioned with great honour the names of Haller, Linnæus, Buffon, and, though often a dispute arose as to errors into which they might have fallen, all agreed in the end to honour the recognised abundance of their merits. The subjects were entertaining and important, and excited my imagination. Many names and a copious terminology gradually became known to me, which I caught up the more willingly as I was afraid of writing down a rhyme, however spontaneously it offered itself, or of reading a poem, for I feared that it might please me at the time, and then perhaps very soon I should have to declare it bad, like so much else.

This uncertainty of taste and judgment disturbed me more every day, so at last I fell into despair. I had brought with me those of my youthful works which I thought best, partly because I hoped to get some credit by them, partly in order to be able to test my progress more surely ; but I found myself in the wretched condition in which one is placed when a complete change of mind is required—a renunciation of all that one has hitherto loved and found good. After

some time, however, and many a struggle, I felt so great a contempt for my works begun and ended, that one day on the kitchen hearth I burnt up poetry and prose, plans, sketches, and designs altogether, and by the smoke which filled the whole house threw our good old landlady into no small fright and anxiety.

## BOOK VII

ABOUT the condition of German literature at that time so much has been written, and so sufficiently, that every one who takes an interest in it can be completely informed, as the judgments about it are now pretty well agreed upon ; and what I at present propose to say bit by bit and disconnectedly about it, relates not so much as to how it was constituted in itself, as rather how it was related to me. I will, therefore, first speak of such things by which the public is specially excited, from the two hereditary enemies of all comfortable life and of all cheerful, self-sufficient, living poetry—namely, satire and criticism.

In peaceful times every one wishes to live after his own fashion ; the citizen wishes to carry on his own trade or business and afterwards enjoy himself ; so, too, the author will gladly compose something, make his works known, and hopes if not for reward, yet for praise, because he thinks he has done something good and useful. In this tranquillity the citizen is disturbed by the satirist, the author by the critic, and so peaceful society is put into a disagreeable agitation.

The literary epoch in which I was born was developed out of the preceding one by opposition. Germany, so long inundated by foreign peoples, permeated by other nations, in learned and diplomatic transactions directed to a foreign language, could not possibly cultivate her own. In addition to many new ideas, innumerable strange words were forced upon her necessarily or unnecessarily, and even for objects already well-known, people were induced to make use of foreign expressions and turns of language. The German, having run wild for nearly two centuries in an unhappy, tumultuous condition, went to school among the French in order to learn manners, and among the Romans in order to express himself worthily. But this also was to be done in the mother tongue, when the immediate application of those idioms and their half-Germanisation made both the business

and social style ridiculous. Besides this they adopted without moderation the similes of the southern languages<sup>1</sup> and employed them in a most exaggerated way. Thus they transferred the aristocratic deportment of the prince-like citizens of Rome<sup>2</sup> to the conditions of learned Germans belonging to provincial towns, and were at home nowhere, least of all with themselves.

But as already in this epoch works of genius had appeared, the German sense of freedom and joy also began to stir itself. This, accompanied by a genuine earnestness, insisted that one should write purely and naturally without intermixture of foreign words and in accordance with common intelligible sense. By these praiseworthy endeavours, however, the gates and doors were thrown open to a wide national insipidity, nay, the dyke was broken through by which the great deluge was soon to rush in. Meanwhile a stiff pedantry made a long stand in all four faculties, until at last, much later, it fled from one of them into the other.

Sound brains, children of nature looking freely about them, had therefore two objects on which they could exercise themselves, against which they could work, and, as the matter was of no great importance, could give vent to their petulance; these were: a language disfigured by foreign words, forms, and turns of speech, and then the worthlessness of such writings as had taken care to keep themselves free from that fault; it occurred to nobody that while they struggled against one evil the other was called up for assistance.

Liskow,<sup>3</sup> a bold young man, first ventured to attack by name a shallow, silly writer, whose unskilful behaviour soon gave him the opportunity of proceeding with greater vehemence. He then went further and directed his scorn always against particular persons and objects, whom he despised and sought to render despicable, nay, he persecuted them with passionate hatred. But his career was short; he died soon, lost to knowledge as a restless and ill-balanced youth. In what he did, though he accomplished little, his talent and character may have seemed valuable to his countrymen; for the Germans have always shown a

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<sup>1</sup> Particularly Italian and Spanish.

<sup>2</sup> Ancient Rome.

<sup>3</sup> 1701-60. He was one of the forerunners of Lessing.



peculiar kindness to talents of good promise when prematurely cut off. Suffice it to say, for us Liskow was very early praised and recommended as an excellent satirist who might attain to the rank above the generally beloved Rabener. Here, indeed, we did not see ourselves advanced, for we could discover nothing in his writings except that he had found what was silly to be silly, which seemed to us natural enough.

Rabener,<sup>1</sup> well educated, grown up under good school teaching, of a cheerful and by no means passionate or spiteful nature, took up general satire. His censure of the so-called vices and follies springs from the clear views of a quiet common sense, and from a definite moral conception of how the world ought to be. His denunciation of faults and failings is harmless and cheerful, and to excuse even the slight boldness of his writings, it is supposed that the improvement of fools by ridicule is no fruitless undertaking. Rabener's personality will not easily appear again. As an efficient, punctual man of business he does his duty, and so gains the good opinion of his fellow-townsmen and the confidence of his superiors; along with that he gives himself up by way of recreation to a want of esteem for all that immediately surrounds him. Learned pedants, idle youngsters, every kind of narrowness and conceit, he jests at rather than satirises, and even his mocking expresses no contempt. Just in the same way he laughs about his own condition, his misfortune, his life, and his death.

The way in which this writer treats his subjects has little of the æsthetic in it. In external forms he is, no doubt, varied enough, but throughout he makes too much use of direct irony, namely, in praising the blameworthy and blaming the praiseworthy, which rhetorical method should only be applied very rarely, for in the long run it becomes annoying to clear-sighted men, confuses the weak, while indeed it suits the great middle class, which, without any special expense of intelligence, can imagine themselves cleverer than others. But what he brings forward, and the way he does it, bears witness to his rectitude, cheerfulness, and equanimity, so that we always feel prepossessed in his favour; the unbounded applause of his own time was

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<sup>1</sup> 1717-71. He was a collector of taxes at Dresden.

a consequence of such moral excellencies. It was natural that people should look for originals to his general description and found them ; that individuals complained of him followed from it ; his over-long defence that his satire had nothing personal proved the annoyance which had been produced. Some of his letters crown him as a man and an author. The confidential letter in which he describes the siege of Dresden, how he loses his house, his effects, his papers, and his wigs, without having his equanimity in the least shaken or his cheerfulness disturbed, is highly valuable, though his contemporaries and fellow-citizens could not forgive him this fortunate temperament. The letter in which he speaks of the decline of his powers and of his approaching death is in the highest degree worthy of respect, and Rabener deserves to be honoured as a saint by all cheerful, intelligent men, who gaily resign themselves to earthly events.

Reluctantly I tear myself away from him, only I would make this remark : his satire refers throughout to the middle class ; he lets it be noticed here and there that he knows the higher classes well, but does not consider it advisable to touch upon them. It can be said that he had no successors, that no one was found who could consider himself equal or even similar to him.

Now to criticism ! and first of all for the theoretical experiments. It is not going too far to say that at that time the ideal had fled out of the world into religion ; indeed, it scarcely even made its appearance in moral philosophy ; of a highest principle of art no one had a notion. They put into our hands Gottsched's "Critical Art of Poetry" ; it was useful and instructive enough, for it handed over to us a historical information of all the kinds of poetry, as well as of rhythm and its different movements ; the poetic genius was presupposed ! But besides that the poet was to have knowledge, to be learned, he was to possess taste and everything else of that kind. They directed us at last to Horace's "Art of Poetry" ; we gazed at single golden maxims of this invaluable work with awe, but we did not in the least know what to do with it as a whole, nor how we should use it.

The Swiss stood out as Gottsched's antagonists ; they must therefore do something different, accomplish something better, and so we heard that they were in fact superior.

Breitinger's "Critical Art of Poetry" was taken in hand. Here we entered upon a wider field, but, properly speaking, only into a greater labyrinth, which was so much more exhausting, as an able man, in whom we had confidence, was driving us about in it. Let a brief review justify these words.

For the art of poetry in and for itself they could find no basic principle ; it was too spiritual and too transient. Painting, an art which one could hold fast with the eyes, which one could follow step by step with the external senses, seemed more favourable for such an end ; the English and French had already theorised about plastic art, and it was thought that poetry might be based on a comparison drawn from this. The former placed images before the eyes, the latter before the imagination ; poetical images, therefore, were the first things that were taken into consideration. People began with comparisons, descriptions followed, and only that came to be expressed which had always been capable of representation to the external senses.

Images, then ! But where should one get those images except from Nature ? The painter openly imitated Nature ; why should not the poet do so too ? But Nature as she lies before us cannot be imitated ; she contains so much that is insignificant and unworthy, one must choose ; but what determines the choice ? One must select that which is important ; but what is important ?

To answer this question the Swiss may have taken a long time, but they came upon an idea which is indeed singular, yet pleasant, nay, amusing, for they say the new is always the most important ; and after they have considered this for a while they discover that the marvellous is always newer than everything else.

They had now pretty well got together the poetical requirements, but they still had to consider that the marvellous might also be empty and without relation to man. But such a relation, demanded as necessary, must be a moral one, from which the improvements of mankind should manifestly follow, and so a poem has reached its ultimate aim when, with everything else accomplished, it is also useful. According to these requisites they now wanted to test the different kinds of poetry ; those which imitated Nature, besides being marvellous and, at the same time, of a moral aim and use, should rank as the first and highest.

And after much consideration this great pre-eminence was ascribed to "Æsop's Fables" with the greatest conviction!

Strange as such a deduction may now appear to us, it had yet the most decided influence on the best minds. That Gellert and afterwards Lichtwer devoted themselves to this department,<sup>1</sup> that even Lessing attempted to labour in it, that so many others turned their talents towards it, speaks for the confidence which this kind of poetry had gained. Theory and practice always act upon each other; from their works one can see men's opinions, and, from their opinions, predict what they will do.

We mustn't abandon our Swiss theory without doing it justice. Bodmer, with all the pains he took, remained both theoretically and practically a child all his life. Breitinger was an excellent, learned man, full of insight, whom the essential requirements of a poem did not escape when he looked rightly about him; nay, it can be shown that he may have dimly felt the deficiencies of his method. Remarkable, for instance, is his question: "Whether a certain descriptive poem by König on the 'Review-camp of Augustus the Second' is really a poem?" and the answer to the same shows good sense. But it may serve for his complete justification that he, starting from a false point, on a circle almost run out already, yet strikes upon the main principle, and at the end of the book finds himself obliged to recommend as additions the representation of the manners, characters, passions, in short, the whole inner man, to which, indeed, poetry especially belongs. It may well be imagined into what perplexity young minds felt themselves placed by such dislocated maxims, half-understood laws, and broken-up dogmas. We kept ourselves to examples, and there, too, were not much better off; the foreigners stood too far from us, and so did the ancients, and from the best native poets there always looked out a decided individuality, to the virtues of which we could not lay claim, and into the faults of which we could not help feeling afraid of falling. For him who felt anything productive in himself it was a condition full of despair.

If one considers exactly what was lacking to German poetry, it was value, and that, too, a national one; there

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<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, that of fables.

was never any lack of talent. Here let us mention only Günther,<sup>1</sup> who may be called a poet in the full sense of the word. A decided talent, endowed with sensuousness, imagination, memory, gifts of conception and representation, productive in the highest degree, ready at rhythm, intellectual, witty, and besides having varied information—he possessed everything, in short, for creating by means of poetry a second life within life, and even within the common real life. We marvel at his great facility, in his occasional poems, of elevating by the feelings all conditions, and adorning them with suitable sentiments, images, historical and legendary traditions. Their roughness and wildness belong to his time, his mode of life, and especially his character, or, if you like, his lack of character. He could not control himself, and so his life, like his poetry, melted away from him.

By his vacillating conduct Günther had trifled away the good fortune of being appointed at the Court of Augustus II., where, in addition to every other kind of ostentation, they were looking about for a Court poet who could give dignity and grace to their festivities and immortalise a transitory pomp. Von König had better manners and was more fortunate; he filled the position worthily and with applause.

In all sovereign States the material for poetry comes from above downwards, and the "Review-camp at Mühlberg" ("Das Lustlager bei Mühlberg") was perhaps the first worthy object, provincial, if not national, which came before the poet. Two kings saluting one another in the presence of a great army, their whole court and military state around them, well-appointed troops, a sham fight, fêtes of all kinds—occupation enough for the outward sense and overflowing material for delineating and descriptive poetry.

This subject had, in fact, an internal defect, namely, that it was only pomp and show, from which no real action could issue. None except the very first made themselves conspicuous, and even if they had done so, the poet dared not elevate one without hurting others. He had to consult the "Court and State Calendar," and consequently the delineation of persons came off drily enough; nay, even his

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<sup>1</sup> 1695-1723. Goethe was the first to appreciate this poet.

contemporaries made him the reproach that he had described the horses better than the men. But should not this redound to his credit that he showed his art just there where an object for it presented itself? The main difficulty, too, seems soon to have manifested itself to him, for the poem never advanced beyond the first canto.

Amid such studies and reflections an unexpected event surprised me and frustrated my laudable intention of getting to know our new literature from the beginning. My fellow-countryman, John George Schlosser,<sup>1</sup> after he had spent his academic years in industry and exertion, betook himself to Frankfort-on-the-Main in the customary profession of a lawyer; but his aspiring mind, which sought after the Universal, could not for many reasons reconcile itself to these conditions. He took a post as private secretary to the Duke Frederick Eugen of Würtemberg, who resided in Treptow, without hesitation; for the Prince was noted among those great men who, in a noble and independent manner, sought to enlighten themselves, their families, and the world, and to unite them for higher aims. It was this Prince Frederick<sup>2</sup> who, to ask advice about the bringing up of his children, had written to Rousseau, whose well-known answer begins with the famous phrase, "*Si j'avais le malheur d'être né prince.*"

Not only in the business of the Prince, but also in the education of his children, Schlosser was, if not to superintend, to assist in word and deed. This noble young man, who harboured the best will, who laboured after a complete purity of morals, by a certain dry severity would easily have alienated men from him, had not a fine and rare literary cultivation, his knowledge of languages, his facility for expressing himself in writing whether in prose or verse, attracted every one and made life with him more agreeable. I was told that he would pass through Leipsic, and I expected him with longing. He came and put up at a little inn or wine-house which was situated in the Brühl (Marsh), and whose landlord was called Schönpkopf. This man had a native of Frankfort for his wife, and though he entertained few persons during the rest of the year and could receive no guests in his small house, yet at the time of

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<sup>1</sup> 1739-99. He married Goethe's sister in 1773. •

<sup>2</sup> It was Ludwig, the brother of Frederick, who wrote to Rousseau.

the fair he was visited by many Frankforters, who were accustomed to dine and, in case of need, to take up their quarters there. Thither I hastened to seek Schlosser after he had sent to announce his arrival to me. I scarcely remembered having seen him before, and found a young man, well built, with a round, composed face, without the features losing their sharpness on that account. The form of his rounded forehead between black eyebrows and locks, indicated earnestness, severity, and perhaps obstinacy. He was in a certain measure the opposite of me, and this very thing no doubt laid the foundation of our lasting friendship. I had the greatest respect for his talents, all the more when I noticed that in the certainty of all which he did and produced, he was completely superior to me. The respect and confidence which I showed him confirmed his affection and increased the indulgence which he was obliged to have with my lively, unsteady, and ever-excitabile temperament in contrast with his own. He studied the English writers diligently. Pope was, if not his model, yet his aim, and he had, in opposition to the "Essay on Man" of that author, written a poem in like form and metre which was to procure for the Christian religion a triumph over the Deism of that work. From the great store of papers which he carried with him, he let me see poetical and prose compositions in all languages, which, while they challenged me to imitation, still more disgusted me infinitely. Yet I managed to help myself immediately by activity. I wrote German, French, English, and Italian poems directed to him, the material for which I took from our conversations, which were throughout important and instructive. Schlosser did not want to leave Leipsic without having seen face to face the men who had a name. I willingly took him to those I knew; and with those whom I had not yet visited, in this way I became honourably acquainted, because he was received with distinction as a well-informed man of character, and well knew how to hold his own in conversation. Our visit to Gottsched I cannot pass over, as it exemplifies the character and manners of that man. He lived very respectably in the first storey of the Golden Bear, where the elder Breitkoff had promised him a lodging for life on account of the great advantage which Gottsched's writings, translations, and other aids had brought to the trade.

We had ourselves announced. The servant led us into a large room, saying his master would come immediately. Now, whether we did not rightly understand a gesture which he made, I cannot say ; enough, we thought he directed us into an adjoining room. We entered on to a singular scene ; for at the moment Gottsched, the tall, broad, gigantic man, in a dressing-gown of green damask lined with red taffeta, entered at the opposite door, but his huge head was bald and without covering. This was, however, immediately to be provided for ; the servant sprang in at a side door with a great full-bottomed wig in his hands (the curls came down to the elbows), and handed the head ornament to his master with a frightened gesture. Gottsched, without manifesting the least vexation, lifted the wig from his servant's arm with the left hand, and while he very skilfully swung it on to his head, with his right paw he gave the poor man a box on the ear, so that he, as is wont to happen in a comedy, went spinning out of the door, whereupon the respectable old father invited us quite gravely to be seated, and carried on a fairly long discourse with good grace.

As long as Schlosser remained in Leipsic I dined with him every day, and got to know a very pleasant company at dinner. Some Livonians and the son of Hermann, chief Court preacher in Dresden, afterwards burgomaster in Leipsic, and their tutors ; Hofrath Pfeil, author of the "Count von P.," a continuation of Gellert's "Swedish Countess"<sup>1</sup> ; Zachariä, a brother of the poet ; and Krebel, editor of geographical and genealogical manuals—were polite, cheerful, and friendly men. Zachariä was the most quiet ; Pfeil, an elegant man, who had something almost diplomatic about him, yet without affectation and with great good humour ; Krebel, a genuine Falstaff, tall, corpulent, fair, with prominent, merry eyes, bright as the blue sky, always happy and in good spirits. These persons all treated me in the most kind manner, partly on account of Schlosser, partly on account of my own frank good humour and obliging disposition, and it required no great persuasion to make me partake of their table in the future. In fact, I remained with them after Schlosser's departure, gave up Ludwig's

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<sup>1</sup> This was an imitation of the Richardsonian novel.



table, and found myself in this limited society so much better off, as the daughter of the family, a very neat, pretty girl, pleased me very much and opportunities of exchanging friendly glances with her—a pleasure which I had neither sought nor found by accident since the mischance with Gretchen. I spent the dinner-hours with my friends cheerfully and profitably. Krebel was particularly fond of me, and knew how to tease and stimulate me in moderation; Pfeil, on the contrary, showed his earnest affection for me by seeking to guide and settle my judgment on many things.

During this intercourse I became aware, through conversation, examples, and my own reflection, that the first step in delivering ourselves from the insipid, verbose, empty epoch could be taken only by definiteness, precision, and brevity. In the style which had hitherto prevailed, one could not distinguish the commonplace from what was better, since all were brought down to a level with each other. Authors had already tried to escape from this widespread disease, and they succeeded more or less. Haller and Ramler were by nature inclined to compression; Lessing and Wieland were led to it by reflection. The former became by degrees quite epigrammatic in his poems, terse in "Minna," laconic in "Emilia Galotti"; later on he turned back to that cheerful *naïveté* which suits him so well in "Nathan." Wieland, who had been occasionally prolix in "Agathon," "Don Sylvio," and the "Comic Tales," becomes in "Musarion" and "Idris" condensed and precise in a wonderful way, and also graceful. Klopstock, in the first cantos of the "Messiah," is not without diffuseness; in the odes and other small poems he is compressed, as also in his tragedies. By his rivalry with the ancients, especially with Tacitus, he sees himself constantly forced into narrower limits, by which he at last becomes incomprehensible and unpleasing. Gerstenberg, a fine but eccentric talent, also distinguishes himself; his talent is appreciated, but on the whole he gives little pleasure. Gleim, diffuse and easy by nature, is scarcely once concise in his war songs. Ramler is indeed more critic than poet. He begins to collect what the Germans have accomplished in lyric poetry. He now finds scarcely one poem fully satisfies him; he must omit, arrange, and alter so that the things may have some

sort of form. By this means he makes himself almost as many enemies as there are poets and amateurs, since every one, properly speaking, recognises himself only in his defects, and the public is more interested in a faulty individuality than for that which is produced or amended according to a universal law of taste. Rhythm lay yet in the cradle, and no one knew of a means of shortening its childhood. Poetical prose took the upper hand. Gessner and Klopstock excited many imitators ; others, again, still demanded a metre, and translated this prose into intelligible rhythms. But even these gave nobody satisfaction, for they were obliged to omit and add, and the prose original always seemed the better. But the more, with all this, conciseness is sought for, the more does a judgment become possible, because that which is important, being more closely compressed, at last allows a certain comparison to be made. It happened also at the same time that many kinds of really poetical forms arose, for as they tried to represent only what was necessary in every object they wished to imitate, they were obliged to do justice to every one of these ; and in this way, though no one did it consciously, the modes of representation multiplied themselves, among which, indeed, were some which were clearly caricatures, while many an attempt was unsuccessful.

Unquestionably, Wieland possessed the finest natural gifts of all. He had early cultivated himself in those ideal regions where youth so willingly lingers, but when, by what is called experience, by the events of the world and women, these were made distasteful to him, he threw himself on the side of the real, and pleased himself and others in the contest of the two worlds, where, in light skirmishing between jest and earnest, he displayed his talent most beautifully. How many of his brilliant productions fell in the time of my academic years ! “ Musarion ” had most influence on me, and I can yet remember the place and very spot where I had the first sight of the proof sheets which Oeser gave me. It was here that I thought I saw antiquity living and fresh. Everything that is plastic in Wieland’s genius here showed itself in its greatest completeness, and when that Phantias-Timon,<sup>1</sup> condemned to an unhappy sobriety, finally reconciles himself with his mistress and the world, one can well with

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<sup>1</sup> Phantias was the hero of “ Musarion, called Timon from his misanthropy.”

him live through the misanthropical epoch. For the rest we easily conceded to these works a cheerful aversion from those exalted sentiments, which, by an easy misapplication to life, are often liable to the suspicion of fanaticism. We forgave the author for prosecuting with ridicule what we held to be true and honourable, the more readily as he thereby gave us to understand that it caused him continual trouble.

How wretchedly criticism at that time received such labours can be seen from the first volumes of the "Universal German Library." There is honourable mention of the "Comic Tales," but there is here no trace of insight into the character of poetry itself. The reviewer, like every one else at that time, had cultivated his taste on examples. It is never here considered that in the judgment of such parodied works one must have before the eyes the original noble, beautiful object, in order to see whether the parodist has really got from it a weak and comic side, whether he has borrowed anything from it, or, under the appearance of such an imitation, has perhaps delivered an excellent invention of his own. Of all this there is no idea, but the poems are praised and blamed by passages. The reviewer, as he himself confesses, has underlined so much that pleased him that he cannot quote it all in print. When they meet the highly meritorious translation of Shakespeare with the exclamation: "By rights a man like Shakespeare should not have been translated at all!" it will be understood, without saying anything further, how infinitely the "Universal German Library" was behindhand in matters of taste, and that young people animated by true feeling had to look about them for other guiding stars.

The Germans sought everywhere for the material which, in this manner, more or less determined the form. They had treated few national subjects, or none at all. Schlegel's "Hermann" only pointed the way. The idyllic tendency extended itself without end. The want of definite character with Gessner, in spite of his great charm and childlike affection, made every one think that he could do something similar. Just in the same manner, those poems were seized out of what is universally human, which should have represented a foreign nationality, for example, the Jewish pastoral poems, above all those, on the patriarchs, and whatever else

related to the Old Testament. Bodmer's "Noachide" was a perfect symbol of the flood which swelled around the German Parnassus, and which only abated slowly. The leading-strings of Anacreon allowed innumerable mediocre brains to reel about at large. The precision of Horace compelled the Germans, though slowly, to conform to him. Comic heroic poems, mostly after the pattern of Pope's "Rape of the Lock," did not serve to bring in a better time. Yet I must here mention a delusion which worked as seriously as it must be ridiculous when one examines it more closely. The Germans had now sufficient historical knowledge of all the kinds of poetry in which the different nations had distinguished themselves. By Gottsched this classifying work, which, properly speaking, destroys the inner conception of poetry, had already been pretty completely hammered together in his "Critical Art of Poetry," and it had been shown at the same time that the German poets, too, had known how to fill up all the rubrics with excellent works. And thus it ever went on. Every year the collection was more considerable, but every year, too, one work pushed the other out of the place in which it had hitherto shone. We now possessed if not Homers, yet Virgils and Miltons ; if not a Pindar, yet a Horace ; of Theocrituses there was no lack ; and thus they weighed themselves by comparisons from without, while the mass of poetical works always increased, so that at last there could also be a comparison from within.

If in matters of taste things stood on a very uncertain footing, there could be no dispute that, within the Protestant part of Germany and Switzerland, that which is generally called common sense began to bestir itself quite briskly at that epoch. The scholastic philosophy—which always has the merit of bringing forward all that about which man can ever inquire, according to accepted principles, in a favourite order, under definite rubrics—had, by the frequent obscurity and apparent uselessness of its subject-matter, by its untimely application of a method in itself respectable, and by its too great diffusion over too many subjects, made itself foreign to the mass, distasteful, and finally unnecessary. Many a one was convinced that Nature had endowed him with as good and straightforward a sense as, perhaps, he required to form such a clear conception of objects that he

could be even with them and produce to the profit of himself and others, without troubling himself about the most universal matters and investigating how the most remote things, which do not particularly affect us, hang together. Men made the trial, opened their eyes, looked straight before them, were observant, diligent, active, and believed that when ~~one~~ judges and acts rightly in one's own circle, one may well presume to speak of other things which lie at a greater distance.

In accordance with such an idea every one was now justified, not only in philosophising, but also gradually in considering himself a philosopher. Philosophy was therefore a more or less sound and practical common sense, which ventured to enter upon the Universal and to decide upon inner and outer experiences. A clear-sighted acuteness and an especial moderation, while the middle road and fairness to all opinions was held to be right, procured consideration and confidence for such writings and oral statements, and thus at last philosophers were found in all the faculties, nay, in all classes and employments.

In this way the theologians were obliged to incline to what is called natural religion, and when it came to discussions how far the light of Nature is sufficient for advancing us in the knowledge of God and the improvement and ennobling of ourselves, they commonly ventured to decide in its favour without much hesitation. From that principle of moderation they gave then equal rights to all positive religions, by which one with another became indifferent and uncertain. For the rest, they let everything stand, and because the Bible is so full of matter that it, more than any other book, offers material for reflection and opportunity for meditation on human affairs, it could still as before be laid as the basis of all sermons and other religious treatises. But over this work, as over all the secular writers, there was impending a peculiar fate, which in the lapse of time was not to be averted. Hitherto one had accepted in implicit faith that this book of books was composed in one spirit, nay, that it was even inspired and, as it were, dictated by the Divine Spirit. Yet already for a long time the discrepancies of the different parts of the same had been now blamed, now defended, by believers and unbelievers. Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, had attacked the Bible

with more or less vehemence, acuteness, audacity, and wantonness, and again it had been taken under the protection of earnest, sound-thinking men of each nation. For myself, I loved and valued it, for to it alone I owed almost all my moral culture, and the events, the doctrines, the symbols, and similes had deeply impressed themselves upon me, and in one way or another had been operative with me. The unjust, scornful, perverted attacks displeased me therefore ; people had already at that time gone so far as to accept very willingly, partly as a main ground for the defence of many passages, that God had adjusted Himself to the modes of thought and power of comprehension of men, that even those impelled by the Spirit had not on that account been able to deny their character and their individuality, and Amos, as the cowherd, did not use the language of Isaiah, who had been a prince.

From these sentiments and convictions there developed quite naturally, especially with the increasing knowledge of languages, that kind of study by which it was attempted to examine more accurately oriental localities, nationalities, natural products, and phenomena, and in this way to represent to oneself that ancient time. Michaelis put the whole force of his talent and knowledge on this side. Descriptions of travels became a powerful aid to the explanation of the Holy Scriptures, and later travellers, furnished with numerous questions, were made, by the answers to the same, to bear witness for the prophets and apostles.

But while on all sides men were busied in bringing the Holy Scriptures to be looked at in a natural way, and in making the peculiar modes of thought and representation in them more generally comprehensible, so that by this historico-critical aspect many an objection might be removed, many offensive things effaced, and every shallow ridicule made ineffective, there appeared in some men just the opposite disposition, since these chose the darkest and most mysterious writings as the subject of their reflections, and wished from internal evidence, by means of conjectures, calculations, and other ingenious and singular combinations, if not to elucidate, yet to confirm them, and, in so far as they contained prophecies, to prove them by the result, and thereby to justify a belief in what was next to be expected.

The venerable Bengel had procured a decided reception

for his labours in the Revelation of St John, because he was known as an intelligent, upright, God-fearing man. Deep minds are compelled to live in the past as well as in the future. The ordinary current of the world can be of no importance to them if they do not, in the course of ages up to the present time, revere revealed prophecies, and in the immediate, as well as in the remote futurity, predictions which are still veiled. Here arises a connection which is wanting in history, which seems to deliver to us only an accidental wavering backwards and forwards in a circle necessarily limited. Dr Crusius<sup>1</sup> belonged to those to whom the prophetic part of Scripture appealed most of all, since it brings into activity the two most opposite qualities of human nature, namely, the affections and the acuteness of the intellect. Many young men had devoted themselves to this teaching, and formed a considerable body, which was all the more conspicuous as Ernesti with his disciples threatened not to illuminate but to disperse completely the obscurity in which these delighted. Hence arose controversies, hate, and persecution, and much unpleasantness. I attached myself to the party of lucidity, and sought to appropriate to myself their principles and advantages, though I allowed myself to forebode that by this highly praiseworthy, sensible method of interpretation, the poetical contents of these writings must at last be lost along with the prophetical.

But those who gave themselves up to German literature and the belles-lettres were more nearly concerned with the efforts of such men as Jerusalem, Zollikofer, Spalding, who in sermons and treatises by a good and pure style tried to win for religion and the moral philosophy so closely related to it applause and attraction, even among people of a certain sense and taste. A pleasing style of writing began to be absolutely necessary; and because such a manner must before all things be comprehensible, so there arose writers from many sides who undertook to write about their studies and professions clearly, plainly, and with insight, as well for experts as for the general public.

After the example of Tissot,<sup>2</sup> a foreigner, physicians also

<sup>1</sup> 1715-75. Professor of Theology in Leipsic. He sought to establish the complete union of Reason and Revelation, of Theology and Philosophy.

<sup>2</sup> 1728-97. The famous physician of Lausanne. His best-known work is "*Avis au peuple sur la Santé*."

now began with zeal to labour for the general culture. Haller, Unzer, and Zimmermann had very great influence, and whatever one may say against them in detail, especially against the last, they were in their time very effective. And of this mention should be made in history, but especially in biography ; for a man remains of significance not in so far as he leaves something behind, but in so far as he acts and enjoys and stirs others to action and enjoyment.

The lawyers, from their youth upwards accustomed to an abstruse style which, in all despatches from the petty court of the "Independent Knight" up to the Imperial Council of Regensburg, was maintained in the quaintest manner, could not easily raise themselves to a certain freedom, the less so as the subjects which they had to treat were most closely connected with the outer form and so with the style. Yet the younger Von Moser had already shown himself an independent and original writer, and Pütter, by the clearness of his delivery, had brought clearness into his subject and the style in which he was to treat it. Everything which proceeded from his school was distinguished by this. And even the philosophers found themselves compelled, in order to be popular, to write clearly and intelligibly. Mendelsohn and Garve appeared, and aroused universal interest and admiration.

With the cultivation of the German language and style in every department, the capacity for forming a judgment also increased, and we admire the reviews at that time of religious and moral, as well as of medical subjects ; while, on the other hand, we notice that the judgments of poems and whatever else may relate to the belles-lettres will be found to be, if not pitiful, at least very weak. This is true of "Literary Epistles" and of the "Universal German Library," as well as of the "Library of the Belles-Lettres," of which one could easily bring forward notable instances.

In however motley a manner all this might be confused, still for every one who thought of producing anything from himself, who did not want only to take words and phrases out of the mouths of his predecessors, nothing further was left but early and late to look about him for some subject-matter which he could make use of. Here, too, we were much led astray. People kept brooding over a word of



Kleist<sup>1</sup> which we often enough had to hear. He had, namely, replied sportively, wittily, and truly to those who took him to task on account of his frequent solitary walks, "that he was not idle at such times, but was going on the picture hunt." This simile suited a nobleman and soldier well enough, who by it placed himself in contrast with men of his ~~rank~~ who did not neglect going out with their gun on their shoulder, hunting hares and partridges whenever an opportunity presented itself. We find, therefore, in Kleist's poems many such individual pictures, happily seized, though not always happily worked up, which remind us of Nature in a kindly manner. But now they recommended us quite seriously to go out on the hunt after pictures, which did not at last leave us wholly without fruit, although Apel's Garden, the kitchen garden, the Rosenthal, Golis, Ruschwitz, and Konnewitz<sup>2</sup> would be the strangest quarter in which to seek for poetical game. And yet I was often moved by that motive to arrange for my walk to be solitary, and because many objects of a beautiful and sublime character did not meet the beholder, and in the truly splendid Rosenthal the midges in the best season of the year suffered no tender thoughts to arise, so I, by unwearied continuing toil, became extremely attentive to the small life of Nature (I would use this word after the analogy of "Still-life"), and as the delicate events of which one is conscious in this circle represent little in and for themselves, so I accustomed myself to see in them a significance, which inclined now to the symbolical, now to the allegorical side, according as intuition, feeling, or reflection had the preponderance. One incident, in place of many, I will relate.

I was, after the fashion of men, in love with my name, and wrote it down everywhere, as young, uncultured people are wont to do. Once I had cut it very finely and exactly on the smooth bark of a lime tree of moderate age. The following autumn, when my affection to Annette<sup>3</sup> was in its fullest bloom, I took the trouble to cut hers above it. Meanwhile I had towards the end of the winter, as a capricious lover, seized many opportunities of teasing her and causing her vexation; by chance in the spring I visited

<sup>1</sup> Ewald von Kleist, author of the poem "Spring." 1715-89.

<sup>2</sup> Villages in the neighbourhood of Leipsic.

<sup>3</sup> Anna Katherina Schönpkopf. In 1769 she became engaged to J. Kanne.

the same spot, and the sap, which was rising strongly in the trees, had welled out through the incisions which formed her name and which were not yet hardened over and moistened, with innocent tears of the tree, traces of my own which had already become hard. Thus to see her here weeping over me, who had so often called up her tears by my unkindness, filled me with confusion. In the remembrance of my injustice and her love, tears came into my eyes. I hastened to ask pardon from her doubly and trebly, and turned this incident into an idyll, which I could never read to myself without affection or, to others, without emotion.

While I now, as a shepherd on the Pleisse, was absorbed childishly enough in such tender subjects, and always only chose such as I could quietly recall to my bosom, German poets had been long provided for from a greater and more important side.

The first true and really vital material of a higher order came into German poetry by Frederick the Great and the deeds of the Seven Years' War. All national poetry must be hollow or become hollow which does not rest on what is universally human, on the events of nations and their shepherds, when both stand for one man. Kings are to be represented in war and danger, where on that account they appear as the first, because they determine and share the fate of the very least, and therefore become much more interesting than the gods themselves, who, when they have determined the fates, withdraw from all participation in the same. In this sense, every nation, if it would be worth anything at all, must possess an epopee, to which the exact form of the epic poem is not necessary.

The war songs struck by Gleim maintain so high a rank among German poems because they arose with and in the deeds which are their subject, and because, besides, their felicitous form, just as if a fellow-combatant had produced them in the loftiest moments, makes us feel the most complete effectiveness.

Ramler sings in a different and most noble manner the deeds of his king. All his poems are full of matter, occupy us with great, heart-elevating subjects, and thereby maintain an imperishable value.

For the internal content of the subject that is worked upon is the beginning and the end of art. It cannot be

denied that genius, that thoroughly cultivated artistic talent, can by its treatment make everything out of everything and subdue the most recalcitrant material. Looked at closely, the result is rather a trick of art than a work of art, which ought to rest upon a worthy subject, that the treatment of it by skill, trouble, and industry may present to us the dignity of the subject-matter only the more happily and splendidly.

The Prussians, and with them Protestant Germany, won thus for their literature a treasure which the opposite party lacked, and the want of which could not be replaced by any subsequent endeavours. Upon the great conception which the Prussians were able to entertain of their king they first established themselves, and with all the more zeal as he, in whose name they did everything, wished once for all to know nothing about them. Already before this, through the French colony, afterwards through the king's predilections for the culture of this nation and for their financial institutions, a mass of French civilisation came into Prussia which was very advantageous to the Germans, since by it they were challenged to contradiction and resistance; the very aversion of Frederick from German was a fortunate thing for the formation of its literary character. They did everything to make the king take notice of them, not, indeed, to be honoured, but only to be noticed by him; but one did it in the German manner, from an internal conviction; one did what he held to be right, and desired and wished that the king would recognise and value this German uprightness. This did not take place, and could not do so, for can one demand of a king who wishes to live and enjoy himself intellectually that he should lose years of his life in order to see all too late that developed and rendered enjoyable which he regards as barbarous? In matters of trade and manufacture he might indeed force on himself, but especially on his people, very moderate makeshifts instead of excellent foreign wares; but here everything comes to perfection more rapidly, and it does not want a man's lifetime to bring such things to maturity.

But one work I must make honourable mention of here, the most genuine offspring of the Seven Years' War, of perfect North German nationality; it is the first theatre production taken from the important events of life, of specific

temporary value, which on that account produced an incalculable effect—"Minna Von Barnhelm." Lessing, who, in opposition to Klopstock and Gleim, willingly cast off his personal dignity, because he was confident that he could any moment seize it and take it up again, delighted in a dissipated life in taverns and the world, as he always wanted a strong counterpoise to his powerfully working inner life, and for this reason he had betaken himself to the suite of General Tauenzien. One easily recognises how the above-mentioned piece was created between war and peace, hatred and affection. It was this production which happily opened the eyes into a higher, more important world from the literary and citizen world in which poetic art had hitherto moved.

The intense hatred in which Prussians and Saxons stood to one another during this war could not be removed at the termination of the same. The Saxon now first felt with real bitterness the wounds which the over-proud Prussian had inflicted on him. Peace between their dispositions could not at once be restored by means of the political peace. The above-mentioned drama was to bring this about symbolically. The grace and amiability of the Saxon women overcame the worth, the dignity, and the stubbornness of the Prussians, and in the principal as well as the subordinate characters a happy union of odd and contradictory elements is artistically represented.

If by these cursory and desultory remarks about German literature I have somewhat perplexed my readers, I have succeeded in giving them a conception of that chaotic condition in which my poor brain found itself when in the conflict of two epochs of such importance for the literary fatherland, so much that was new crowded in upon me before I could come to terms with the old, so much that was old still made its claim over me felt when I already thought I had cause for rejecting it completely ; I will at present try to impart as far as possible the way I entered upon to rescue myself from this difficulty, if only step by step.

The period of prolixity in which my youth had fallen I had laboured through with genuine industry in the society of so many worthy men. The numerous quarto volumes of manuscript which I left behind with my father might serve for sufficient witness of this ; and what a mass of essays,

rough drafts, half-executed designs, had gone up in smoke, more from despondency than from conviction. Now I learnt above all by conversation, by instruction, by so many conflicting opinions, but especially through my fellow-boarder Hofrath Pfeil, to value more and more the importance of the subject-matter and the conciseness of the treatment, without being able to make it clear to myself where the former was to be sought and how the latter was to be reached. For what with the narrowness of my situation, the indifference of my companions, the reserve of the professors, the exclusiveness of the educated inhabitants, and what with the quite insignificant character of natural objects, I was compelled to seek for everything within myself. If I now required for my poems a true basis in feeling or reflection, I had to seek it in my own bosom ; if I demanded for my poetic representation an immediate intuition of the object or the event, I could not step outside the circle which was fitted to touch me and inspire me with an interest. With this view I wrote at first certain little poems in the form of songs or in a freer metre ; they arise from reflection, treat of past events, and for the most part take an epigrammatic turn.

And thus began that tendency from which my whole life long I could not deviate, namely, of transforming into an image, a poem, everything that pleased or troubled me or otherwise occupied me, and to come to some understanding with myself about it in order to rectify my conceptions of external things as well as to tranquillise my inner being about them. For no one was this gift more necessary then for me, whose nature flung him continually from one extreme to the other. All that has become known of me are only fragments of a great confession, and this little book is an attempt I have ventured on to make it complete.

My earlier affection for Gretchen I had now transferred to Annette, of whom I could say no more but that she was young, pretty, lively, loving, and so pleasant that she well deserved to be installed as a little saint in the shrine of the heart for a time, to have devoted to her that reverence which it often causes more pleasure to bestow than to receive. I saw her every day without hindrance, she helped to get ready the meals which I enjoyed, she brought, in the evening at least, the wine which I drank, and already our select

company of midday boarders was warrant that the small house, which was visited by few guests except during the fair, well deserved its good reputation. Opportunity and inclination were found for various kinds of entertainment. But as she neither could nor dared go out of the house much, the pastime was rather poor. We sang the songs of Zachariä, played the " Duke Michael " of Krüger,<sup>1</sup> in which a knotted handkerchief had to take the place of the nightingale, and so for a time things went on quite tolerably. But since such relations, the more innocent they are, afford, therefore, less variety in the long run, I was seized with that evil passion which leads us astray to obtain amusement from the torment of a beloved one, and to domineer over the devotedness of a girl with arbitrary and tyrannical caprice. My ill-humour over the failure of my poetical attempts, of the apparent impossibility of coming to a clear understanding about them, and at everything else which might pinch me here and there, I thought I might vent on her, because she loved me from the bottom of her heart and did all she could to please me. By unfounded and absurd fits of jealousy I destroyed the most delightful days both for myself and her. She endured it for a time with incredible patience, which I was cruel enough to try to the uttermost. But to my shame and despair I was at last obliged to notice that her heart was withdrawn from me, and that I might now well be justified in the madness which I had allowed myself without necessity and without cause. There were also terrible scenes between us, in which I gained nothing ; and now I felt, for the first time, that I really loved her and could not do without her. My passion grew and took all forms of which it was capable under such circumstances ; at last I even took up the rôle of the girl. I sought everything possible in order to be pleasing to her, even to procure her pleasure by means of others, for I could not deny myself the hope of winning her again. But it was too late. I had really lost her, and the madness which I revenged my faults upon myself, while I assaulted in various senseless ways my physical nature in order in some way to hurt my moral nature, contributed very much to the bodily evils under which I lost some of the best years of my life ; yes, I might have been completely

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<sup>1</sup> Comedy in one act which appeared in 1763.

ruined by this loss, had not my poetical talent here shown itself particularly helpful with its healing powers.

Already, at many intervals before, I had been clearly enough conscious of my misconduct. I really pitied the poor child when I saw her so injured by me entirely without necessity. I represented to myself so often and in such detail her condition and my own, and in contrast the contented situation of another couple of our company, that at last I could not forbear treating this situation dramatically as a painful and instructive penance. Hence arose the oldest of my surviving dramatic works, the small piece entitled "*Die Laune des Verliebten*" ("The Lover's Caprice"), in the simple nature of which one may at the same time perceive the rush of a boiling passion.

But already, earlier, a deep, significant, impulsive world had interested me. Through my adventure with Gretchen and the consequences of the same, I had early looked into the strange labyrinth with which civil society is undermined. Religion, morals, law, rank, relations, customs, all rule only the surface of the civil existence. The streets bordered by splendid houses are kept neat, and every one behaves himself there properly enough ; but in the interior it seems all the more disordered, and a smooth exterior, like a thin coat of plaster, whitewashes many a rotten wall, which tumbles together overnight and produces a more frightful effect as it breaks into the midst of a peaceful condition. How many families had I not seen, here and there, either plunged into ruin or kept miserably hanging on the brink of it by means of bankruptcies, divorces, seduced daughters, murders, thefts, poisoning ; and young as I was, I had often lent a hand in such cases for help and preservation : for since my frankness awakened confidence, my silence was proved, my activity feared no sacrifice and liked most to exert itself in the most dangerous affairs, so I often found occasion to act as mediator, to hush up, to divert the lightning flash, with every other assistance of this kind, so that I could not fail as well in my own person, as through others, to come to the knowledge of many afflicting and humiliating experiences. To relieve myself I designed several plays and wrote the arguments of most of them. But since the plots must always be painful, and nearly all these pieces threatened a tragical conclusion, I let one

after the other drop. "*Die Mitschuldigen*" ("The Accomplices") is the only one that was completed, the cheerful and burlesque manner of which on the gloomy family ground appears as if accompanied by somewhat of apprehension, so that in representation it is painful on the whole, though it pleases in individual passages. The illegal deeds, harshly expressed, wound the æsthetic and moral feeling, and therefore the piece on the German stage could find no entrance, though the imitations of the same, which steered clear of those rocks, were received with applause.

Both of those pieces were, however, written from a more elevated point of view without my having been aware of it. They direct us to a considerate patience in making moral imputations, and express jestingly, in somewhat harsh and coarse touches, that most Christian word, "Let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone."

Through this seriousness, which cast a gloom over my first pieces, I made the mistake of neglecting very favourable subjects which lay decidedly within my powers. In the midst of these serious, and for a young man, fearful experiences, there developed in me a restless humour which feels itself superior to the moment, and not only fears no danger but rather wantonly courts it. The basis of this lay in the exuberance of spirits in which the vigorous time of life so much delights, and which, if it expressed itself in a frolicsome way, causes much pleasure, both at the moment and in remembrance. These things are so common that in the vocabulary of our young university friends they are called "suites,"<sup>1</sup> and on account of the close relationship of signification, to say "play suites" is just the same as to say "play pranks." Such humorous acts of daring brought on the stage with wit and sense are of the greatest effect. They differentiate themselves from intrigue in that they are momentary, and that their aim, when they must have one, should not be remote. Beaumarchais has grasped their full value, and the effects of his "*Figaro*" spring pre-eminently from this. When such good-humoured, roguish, and half-knavish pranks are practised with personal risk for noble ends, the situations arising from them are æsthetically and

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<sup>1</sup> The expression "possen reissen" is used also with the university word "suite."



morally considered of the greatest value for the theatre, as, for instance, the opera of the "Water-Carrier,"<sup>1</sup> treats perhaps the happiest subject that we have ever seen upon the stage.

In order to enliven the endless tedium of daily life, I practised innumerable tricks of this sort, partly quite aimlessly, partly in the service of my friends whom I liked to please. For myself, I could not say that I had once acted thus intentionally, nor did I ever consider a feat of this sort as a subject for art; but if I had seized upon and elaborated such materials which were so close at hand, my first works would have been more cheerful and useful. Some incidents which belong here occur indeed later, but isolated and without design.

For since the heart always lies nearer to us than the head and then gives us trouble, when the latter knows well how to help itself, so the affairs of the heart had always appeared to me as the most important. I was never weary of reflecting over the fleeting character of the affections, the mutability of human character, moral sensuality, and all the heights and depths, the combination of which in our nature can be regarded as the riddle of human life. Here, too, I sought to get rid of what troubled me in a song, an epigram, in some kind of rhyme, which, since they referred to the most private feelings and the most special circumstances, could scarcely interest anyone but myself.

Meanwhile my external relations after the lapse of a short time had very much changed. Mme Böhme, after a long and melancholy illness, had at last died<sup>2</sup>; she had latterly ceased to admit me to her presence. Her husband could not be particularly satisfied with me; I did not appear to him to be sufficiently industrious, but to be frivolous. He especially took it very ill of me when it was betrayed to him that in the lectures on German Public Law, instead of taking notes properly, I had drawn on the margin of my notebook the personages presented to our notice, such as the President of the Chamber, the Moderators, and Assessors, in strange wigs; and by this drollery I had distracted my attentive neighbours and set them laughing. After the loss of his

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<sup>1</sup> Or "Les deux Journées," by Cherubini, 1760-1842.

<sup>2</sup> She died in 1767 at the age of forty-two.

wife he lived in a still more retired fashion than before, and I finally avoided him so as to escape from his reproaches. But it was particularly unfortunate that Gellert would not use the power which he might have exercised over us. Indeed he had not the time to act as father confessor and to inquire after the character and faults of each one of us ; he took the matter, therefore, very much in a general way, and thought to restrain us by means of the church institutions. On that account, usually, when he once let us come before him, he used to lower his little head and in his weeping, pleasing voice ask us if we went regularly to church, who our confessor was, and whether we partook of the Holy Communion. If, now, we came off badly from this examination, we were dismissed with lamentations ; we were more vexed than edified, yet we could not help loving the man heartily.

On this occasion I cannot omit recalling something from my earlier youth in order to make it clear how the great affairs of the ecclesiastical religion must be carried on with order and coherence if they are to prove as fruitful as is expected. The Protestant service had too little fullness and consistency to enable it to hold the congregation together ; so it easily happens that members separate themselves from it, and either form small congregations, or, without ecclesiastical connection, quietly carry on their citizen life side by side. So for a considerable time complaint was made that the church-goers were diminishing from year to year, and just in the same proportion the persons who partook of the Lord's Supper. With regard to both, but especially the latter, the cause lies close at hand, but who dares to speak it out. I will attempt to do so. In moral and religious, as well as in physical and civic matters, man does not like to do anything on the spur of the moment ; he requires a sequence from which habit results ; what he is to love and perform he cannot represent to himself as single or isolated, and if he is to repeat anything, it must not have become strange to him. If the Protestant worship lacks fullness in general, let it be examined in detail, and it will be found that the Protestant has too few sacraments ; indeed, he has only one in which he himself is active, namely, the Lord's Supper, for baptism he sees only when it is performed on others and is not much edified by it. The sacraments are

the highest part of religion, the symbols to our senses of an extraordinary divine favour and grace. In the Lord's Supper earthly lips are to receive a divine Being embodied, and under the form of an earthly nourishment to partake of a heavenly. This idea is just the same in all Christian churches ; whether the Sacrament is taken with more or less submission to the mystery, with more or less accommodation to that which is intelligible, it always remains a great and holy thing, which in reality takes the place of the possible or impossible, the place of that which man can neither attain to nor dispense with. But such a sacrament ought not to stand alone ; no Christian can partake of it with the true joy for which it is given if the symbolical or sacramental sense is not nurtured within him. He must be accustomed to regard the inner religion of the heart and that of the external church as perfectly one, as the great universal sacrament which again divides itself into so many others and communicates to these parts its holiness, indestructibility, and eternity.

Here a youthful pair give their hands to one another, not for a passing salutation or for the dance ; the priest pronounces his blessing upon them, and the bond is indissoluble. It is not long before this wedded pair bring a likeness to the threshold of the altar ; it is purified with holy water and incorporated into the church so that it cannot trifle away this benefit except through the most monstrous apostacy. The child in the course of life practises himself in earthly things, in heavenly ones he must be instructed. If it appears on examination that this has been fully done, he is now received into the bosom of the church as a real citizen, as a true and voluntary confessor, not without external signs of the importance of this act. Now for the first time he is decidedly a Christian, now for the first time he knows his advantages and also his duties. But meantime much that is strange has happened to him as a man ; through instruction and punishments it has been made clear to him how serious appears the state of his inner life, and there will constantly be questions of doctrines and transgressions, but punishment shall no longer take place. Here now, in the infinite confusion in which he must entangle himself, in the conflict of natural and religious claims, an admirable expedient is given him in confiding his deeds and misdeeds,

his weaknesses and doubts, to a worthy man expressly appointed for that purpose, who knows how to calm, to warn, to strengthen him, to chasten him likewise by symbolical punishments, and at last, by a complete washing away of his guilt, to render him happy and to give him back, pure and cleansed, the tablet of his manhood. Thus prepared and purely calmed to rest by several sacramental acts, which on closer examination branch off into smaller sacramental traits, he kneels down to receive the host ; and that the mystery of this lofty act may be still enhanced, he sees the chalice only in the distance ; it is no common eating and drinking that satisfies, it is a heavenly food which makes him thirst after heavenly drink. Let not the youth, however, believe it is all finished with this ; let not even the man believe it. For in earthly relations we are at last accustomed to depend on ourselves, and even there, knowledge, understanding, and character will not always suffice ; in heavenly things, on the other hand, we have never finished learning. The higher feeling within us, which often even finds itself not truly at home, is besides oppressed by so much from without that our own power hardly affords all that is necessary for counsel, consolation, and help. But for this object that remedy is instituted for our whole life, and an intelligent, pious man is continually waiting to show the right way to those in error, and to relieve those who are distressed.

And what now has been thus proved through the whole life is to show all its healing power ten times more active at the gate of Death. According to a trustful custom inculcated from youth upwards, the dying man receives with fervour those symbolical, significant assurances, and where every earthly guarantee passes away, he is assured by a heavenly one of a blessed existence for all eternity. He feels himself perfectly convinced that neither a hostile element nor a malignant spirit can prevent him from clothing himself with a glorified body, that in immediate relation with God he may take part in the infinite blessedness which flows from Him.

In conclusion, then, that the whole man may be sanctified, the feet also are anointed and blessed. They are to feel, even in the event of a possible recovery, a repugnance to touching this earthly, hard, impenetrable soil. A wonderful

swiftness is to be communicated to them by which they thrust away from under them the clod of earth which has hitherto attracted them. And so through a brilliant circle of equally holy acts, the beauty of which has been only briefly hinted at by us, the cradle and the grave, however far apart they may chance to be, are bound in one continuous orbit. —

But all these spiritual marvels spring not, like other fruits, from the natural soil, for there they cannot be sown, nor planted, nor fostered. From another region we must pray for them, which cannot be done by every one, nor at all times. Here there comes to meet us now the highest of these symbols from ancient pious tradition. We hear that one can be more favoured, blessed, and sanctified from above than another. But that this may not appear as a natural gift, this great favour, bound up with a serious duty, must be communicated by one authorised person to another ; and the greatest good which a man can attain, without that he has to get possession of it by his own wrestling and effort, must be preserved and perpetuated on earth by spiritual inheritance. Truly, in the ordination of the priest everything is comprehended which is necessary for making those holy acts effectual, by which the multitude receives grace without any other activity being necessary on its part, except that of faith and implicit confidence. And so the priest comes forward in the line of his predecessors and successors, in the circle of those anointed with him, representing the highest source of blessings, all the more gloriously as it is not he whom we reverence, but his office ; not his nod at which we bow the knee, but the blessing which he imparts and which seems the more holy and to come more immediately from heaven because the earthly instrument cannot at all weaken or invalidate it by its sinful, nay, wicked nature.

How is this truly spiritual connection split up in Protestantism, while one part of the above-mentioned symbols are declared to be apocryphal and only a few canonical ; and how will they, by their indifference to one of these, prepare us for the high dignity of the other ?

In my time I had been entrusted for religious instruction to a good old infirm clergyman, who for many years had been confessor of the family. The Catechism, a paraphrase

of it, the Scheme of Salvation, I had at my fingers' ends ; of the strongly proving biblical texts I lacked not one ; but from all this I reaped no fruit, for as they assured me that the excellent old man arranged his chief examination according to an old formula, I lost all pleasure and inclination for the matter, spent the last week in all sorts of diversions, laid in my hat the loose leaves borrowed from an old friend, who had got them from the clergyman, and without feeling and without sense, read off all which I should have known how to utter with feeling and conviction.

But I found my good will and my aspirations in this important matter still more paralysed by a dry spiritless routine, when I was now to draw near to the confessional. I was certainly conscious of many frailties but of no great faults, and that very consciousness diminished them, since it directed me to that moral strength which lay within me, and which, with resolution and perseverance, was at last to become master of the old Adam. We were taught that we were much better than the Catholics for this very reason, that in the confessional we were not obliged to acknowledge anything in particular, nay, that this would not be proper, even if we wished to do it. This last did not seem right to me, for I had the strangest religious doubts, which I would willingly have had set right on such an occasion. Now as this was not to be done, I composed a confession for myself, which, while it well expressed my circumstances, was to confess to an intelligent man, in general, that which I was forbidden to say in detail. But when I entered the old choir of the Barefoot Friars and approached the strangely latticed enclosures in which the reverend gentlemen were to be found for that purpose, when the sexton opened the door and I saw myself shut up in the narrow space face to face with my spiritual grandsire, and he with his feeble, nasal voice bid me welcome, all the light of my mind and heart went out at once, the well-memorised confession would not pass my lips ; in my embarrassment, I opened the book which I had in my hands and read from the first but short formula, which was so general that anyone might have spoken it with quite a safe conscience. I received the absolution and withdrew, neither warm nor cold, and went the next day with my parents to the Table of the Lord, and

for a few days behaved myself as was fitting after so holy an act.

In the sequel, however, there came over me the evil which, from the fact of our religion being founded on many complicated dogmas, on texts of the Bible which admit of several interpretations, attacks scrupulous men so that it brings on a hypochondriacal condition and raises this to the highest point, namely, to fixed ideas. I have known several men who, though their manner of thinking and living was quite rational, could not free themselves from the thought of the sin against the Holy Ghost and from the fear that they had committed it.

A similar trouble threatened me in the matter of the Holy Communion. For the text that one who partakes of the Holy Sacrament unworthily eats and drinks his own damnation<sup>1</sup> had very early made a tremendous impression on me. Every fearful thing which I had read in the histories of the Middle Ages, of the judgments of God, of those most strange ordeals by red-hot iron, flaming fire, swelling water, and what the Bible tells us of the draught which agrees well with the innocent but puffs up and hursts the guilty—all this pictured itself to my imagination and united itself with the most frightful things, since false views, hypocrisy, perjury, blasphemy, all seemed to weigh down the unworthy person at this most holy act, which was the more terrible as no one could dare to declare himself worthy; and the forgiveness of sins, by which at last everything was to be settled, was found to rest on so many conditions that one was not sure of freely appropriating it to oneself.

This gloomy scruple tormented me to such a degree, and the expedient which they wished to represent to me as sufficient seemed to me so bald and feeble, that the bugbear only gained a more fearful aspect, and as soon as I had reached Leipsic I tried to free myself altogether from connection with the church. How oppressive, then, must have been to me the exhortations of Gellert, whom I, in view of the generally laconic style with which he was obliged to repel our obtrusiveness, did not like to trouble with such singular questions, and the less so as in my more cheerful hours I was myself ashamed of them, and at last left behind me

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➤ 1 Corinthians xi. 29.

completely this strange anguish of conscience together with church and altar. Gellert had, in accordance with his pious feelings, composed a moral philosophy which from time to time he read publicly, and thus in an honourable manner acquitted himself of his duty to the public. Gellert's writings had for a long time been the foundation of the German moral culture, and every one anxiously wished to see that work printed, but since this was only to happen after the good man's death, people thought themselves very fortunate to hear him himself deliver it in his lifetime. The philosophical lecture-room was at such times completely crowded, and the beautiful soul, the pure will, and the interest of the noble man in our welfare, his exhortations, warnings, and entreaties, delivered in a somewhat hollow and sorrowful tone, made indeed a momentary impression, but did not last long—the less so as there were many scoffers who contrived to make us suspicious of this tender and, as they thought, enervating manner. I remember a Frenchman travelling through the town who inquired after the maxims and opinions of the man who had such an immense concourse. When we had given him the necessary information, he shook his head and said, laughing : “ *Laissez le faire, il nous forme des dupes.* ”<sup>1</sup>

And thus, then, did good society, which cannot easily endure anything worthy in its neighbourhood, know how to spoil on occasion the moral influence which Gellert might have had upon us. Now it was taken ill of him that he instructed the rich Danes of distinction, who were specially recommended to him, better than the other students, and had a noticeable solicitude for them ; now he was charged with selfishness and nepotism because he caused a table d'hôte to be established for these young men at his brother's house. This man, tall, good-looking, blunt, unceremonious, somewhat rude, was said to have been a fencing-master, and in spite of the too great leniency of his brother, the noble boarders were often treated harshly and roughly, hence people thought they must again take the part of these young folk, and pulled about the good name of the excellent Gellert to such a degree that, in order not to be mistaken about him, we became indifferent to him and did not visit

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<sup>1</sup> He only makes fools, i.e., people with whom we can do as we like.



him any more ; yet we always saluted him in our best manner as he came riding along on his tame white horse. This horse the Elector had presented to him, to oblige him to take exercise so necessary for his health—a distinction which was not easily forgiven him.

And thus, gradually, the period approached when all authority was to vanish from before me, and I was to be in doubt and despair about the best individual whom I had known or imagined. Frederick II. stood ever in my thought above all the distinguished men of the century, and therefore it was very surprising to me that I could praise him so little before the inhabitants of Leipsic as formerly in my grandfather's house. They had indeed felt the hand of war heavily, and therefore one must not grudge them thinking that they had not the best opinion of him who had begun and continued it. They were, therefore, willing to let him pass for a distinguished, but by no means for a great man. "There was no art," they said, "in performing something with great means ; and if one spares neither land nor money nor blood one may well accomplish one's purpose at last. Frederick had shown himself great in none of his plans, and in nothing which he had, properly speaking, undertaken. So long as it depended on him, he had only gone on making blunders, and, what was extraordinary in him, only came to light when he was obliged to make these blunders good again. Only from this had he come to his great reputation, since every man wishes for himself the same talent of smoothing out, in a clever way, the blunders which he frequently commits. If one goes through the Seven Years' War step by step, one will find that the king sacrificed his splendid army quite uselessly, and that it was his own fault that the ruinous feud had been protracted to such a length. A truly great man and general would have finished with his enemies much quicker." To maintain these opinions they could cite infinite details which I did not know how to deny, and I gradually found the unbounded reverence, which I had devoted to this remarkable prince from my youth upwards, cooling down.

As the inhabitants of Leipsic destroyed the pleasant feeling of honouring a great man, so did a new friend whom I acquired at this time diminish the respect which I entertained for my present fellow-citizens. This friend was one

of the strangest fellows in the world. His name was Behrisch, and he was tutor to the young Count Lindenau. Even his exterior was singular enough. Lean and well built, far advanced in the thirties, a very large nose, and altogether marked features ; false hair, which might well have been called a peruke, he wore from morning to night, dressed himself very neatly, and never went out but with his sword by his side and his hat under his arm. He was one of those men who have quite a special gift of killing time, or rather, who knew how to make something out of nothing in order to make time pass away. Everything he did must be done with leisureliness and a certain decorum, which might have been called affected if Behrisch had not something even by nature affected in his manner. He resembled an old Frenchman ; he also spoke and wrote French very well and easily. His greatest pleasure was to busy himself seriously about droll matters and to follow up any silly idea without end. Thus he was constantly dressed in grey, and as the different parts of his attire were of different stuffs and also of different shades, he would reflect for whole days how he could procure one grey more for his body, and he was fortunate when he succeeded, and could put us to shame who had doubted it or declared it to be impossible. Then he gave us long severe lectures about our lack of inventive power and over our want of faith in his talents. For the rest, he had studied well, was specially versed in modern languages and their literature, and wrote an excellent hand. He was very well disposed to me, and I, who was always accustomed and inclined to go about with older people, soon attached myself to him. My intercourse, too, served him for special amusement, since he took pleasure in taming my restlessness and impatience, with which, on the other hand, I gave him enough to do. In the art of poetry he had what is called taste, a certain general judgment about the good and bad, the mediocre and the permissible ; yet his judgment was rather censorious, and he destroyed even the little faith which I cherished within me for contemporary writers by unfeeling remarks, which he knew how to advance with wit and humour, over the writings and poems of this man or that. My own things he received with indulgence, and let me have my way, but only on the condition that I would have nothing printed.

On the other hand, he promised me that he himself would copy those pieces which he thought good, and would present me with them in a handsome volume. This undertaking now gave opportunity for the greatest possible waste of time. For before he found the right paper, before he could be satisfied about the size, before he had decided on the breadth of the margins and the form of the handwriting, before the crow-quills were provided, cut into pens, and Indian ink was rubbed in, whole weeks went by without the least thing happening. With such formalities he always set about his writing, and, indeed, by degrees put together a most charming manuscript. The titles of the poems were in Gothic characters, the verses themselves in the customary Saxon handwriting; at the end of every poem was an analogous vignette, which he had either selected somewhere or other, or had invented himself, in which he contrived to imitate very nearly the hatching of the woodcuts and printing blocks which are used on such occasions. To show me these things as he went on, to celebrate beforehand in a comico-pathetical manner my good fortune in seeing myself immortalised in such exquisite handwriting, and that in a style which no printing press could attain, gave another occasion for passing the most agreeable hours. In the meantime his intercourse was always secretly instructive on account of his liberal acquirements, and, as he knew how to subdue my restless, impetuous disposition, was also in a moral sense quite wholesome for me. He had, too, a quite peculiar abhorrence of all roughness, and his jests were always quaint without falling into the uncouth or the trivial. He allowed himself a ridiculous aversion from his countrymen, and described with ludicrous touches even what they were able to undertake. In particular, he was inexhaustible in representing, comically, individual persons, as on the exterior of every one he found something to censure. Thus could he, when we lay together at the window, occupy himself for hours criticising the passers-by, and when he had found fault with them long enough, in showing exactly and circumstantially how they ought to have dressed themselves, how they ought to work and behave in order to look like proper people. Such proposals, for the most part, ended in something unsuitable and absurd, so that we did not laugh so much at how the man looked, but at how, per-

chance, he might have looked if he had been mad enough to caricature himself. In all such things he went to work quite unmercifully, without being in the slightest degree malicious. On the other hand, we knew how to tease him when we assured him that from his exterior he must be taken, if not for a French dancing master, at least for an academical teacher of the language. This reproach was generally the signal for discussions an hour long, in which he was wont to set forth the difference, wide as heaven, which there was between him and an old Frenchman. At the same time he imputed to us commonly all kinds of awkward proposals which we might have made for the alteration and modification of his wardrobe.

The direction of my poetry-writing, which I carried on now more zealously as the transcript went on becoming more beautiful and careful, inclined now entirely to the natural and the true ; and if the subjects could not always be important, I nevertheless tried to express them clearly and with point, all the more so as my friend often caused me to reflect what a great thing it was to write down a verse on Dutch paper with the crow-quill and Indian ink, what time, talent, and exertion it required so that it should not be expended on anything empty and superfluous. At the same time, he was wont to open a finished parcel and circumstantially to explain what ought not to stand in this or that place, or to congratulate me that it did actually not stand there. He then spoke with great contempt of the art of printing, mimicked the compositor, ridiculed his gestures, of his hurried picking out of letters here and there, and derived from this manœuvre all the calamities of literature. On the other hand, he extolled the grace and noble fortune of a writer, and immediately set himself down to exhibit it to us, while he scolded us at the same time for not behaving ourselves at the writing-table exactly according to his example and model. He now returned to the contrast with the compositor, turned a letter which had been begun upside down, and showed how unseemly it would be to write anything from the bottom to the top, or from the right to the left, with other things of that kind with which whole volumes might have been filled. With such harmless fooleries we wasted away our precious time, while it could have occurred to none of us that anything would chance to proceed out

of our circle which would awaken a general sensation and bring us not into the best repute. Gellert may have had little pleasure in his "Practicum," and if, perhaps, he found amusement in giving some directions as to prose and verse style, he did it very privately only to a few, among whom we could not number ourselves. The gaps which thus arose in the public instruction Professor Clodius<sup>1</sup> thought to fill; he had gained some reputation in literature, criticism, and poetry, and as a young, lively, industrious man, found many friends both in the University and the city. Gellert himself referred us to the lectures now commenced by him, and, as far as the principal matter was concerned, we noticed little difference. He, too, only criticised details, also corrected with red ink, and one found oneself in company with mere blunders without a prospect of where the right was to be sought. I had brought to him some of my small works, which he had not treated badly. But just at that time they wrote to me from home that I must without fail furnish a poem for my uncle's wedding. I felt myself far removed from that light and frivolous period in which a similar thing would have given me pleasure, and since I could get nothing out of the actual circumstance, I thought to deck out my work in the best manner with extraneous ornament. I therefore got together all Olympus to consult about the marriage of a Frankfort lawyer; and seriously enough, to be sure, as was fitting for the festival of such an honourable man, Venus and Themis had quarrelled for his sake, yet a roguish trick which Amor played on the latter gained the suit for the former, and the gods decided in favour of the marriage.

My work in no way displeased me. I received from home a handsome letter in its praise, took trouble about another fair copy, and hoped to win some applause from my professor also. But here I had missed my aim. He took the matter severely, and as he did not notice the tone of parody, which nevertheless lay in the notion, he declared the great expenditure of divine means for such an insignificant human end in the highest degree reprehensible; censured the use and misuse of such mythological figures as a false habit originating in pedantic times; found the expression now too high,

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<sup>1</sup> 1738-84. Professor of Philosophy in Leipsic.

now too low, and in certain particulars had not spared the red ink, though he assured me that he had yet done too little. Such pieces were read out and criticised anonymously, indeed, but we used to watch one another, and it remained no secret that this unfortunate assembly of the gods had been my work. Yet since his criticism, when I took his point of view, seemed to be quite just, and those divinities when more nearly inspected were in fact only hollow shadow-forms, so I cursed the whole Olympus, flung away all the mythical Pantheon, and from that time Amor and Luna are the only divinities which appear at all in my little poems.

Among the persons whom Behrisch had chosen as the target of his wit, Clodius stood just at the head; nor was it difficult to find a comical side in him. As a little, rather stout, thick-set figure, in his movements he was violent, somewhat unsteady in his utterance, and restless in his demeanour. In all this he differed from his fellow-citizens, who willingly put up with him because of his good qualities and the fine promise which he gave. One handed over to him usually the poems which had to be made on festal occasions. In the so-called "Ode" he followed the manner which Ramler had used, whom, however, it alone quite suited. But Clodius, as an imitator, had especially marked the foreign words, by means of which the poems of Ramler came forth with a majestic pomp, which, because it is conformable to the greatness of his subject and the rest of his poetic treatment, produces a very good effect on the ear, feelings, and imagination. In Clodius, on the contrary, these expressions appeared strange, because his poetry in other respects was not calculated to elevate the mind in any manner. Now we had been obliged to see such poems beautifully printed and highly praised in our presence, and we found it extremely offensive that he, who had sequestered the heathen gods from us, now wanted to hammer together another ladder to Parnassus out of Greek and Roman rungs of words. These oft-recurring experiences stamped themselves firmly on our memory, and in a merry hour, when we were consuming most excellent cakes in the kitchen garden, it all at once occurred to me to put together these words of might and power in a poem to the cake-baker Händel. No sooner thought than done! And so let it

stand here as it was written on a wall of the house with a pencil :

“ O Händel, whose fame extends from South to North, hear the pæon which rises to your ears. Thou bakest that which Gauls and Britons industriously seek, thou bakest with creative genius original cakes. The ocean of coffee which pours itself out before you is sweeter than the juice which flows from Hymettus. Thy house, a monument, how we reward the arts, hung round with trophies, tells the nations : ‘ Even without a diadem Händel here found his fortune and robbed the Cothurnus of many an eight-groschen piece.’ When thine urn shines hereafter in majestic pomp then will the patriot weep at thy catacomb. But live ! Let thy bed be the nest of a noble brood, stand high as Olympus and firm as Parnassus ! May no phalanx of Greece with Roman ballistæ be able to destroy Germany and Händel. Thy weal is our pride, thy suffering our pain, and Händel’s temple is the heart of the sons of the Muses.”

This poem stood a long time among so many others which disfigured the walls of those rooms without being noticed, and we, who had sufficiently amused ourselves over it, forgot it entirely among other things. A considerable time afterwards Clodius came out with his “ Medon,” whose wisdom, magnanimity, and virtue we found infinitely ridiculous, much as the first representation of the piece was applauded. In the evening, when we met together in our tavern, I quickly made a prologue in doggerel verse in which the Harlequin steps out with two great sacks, puts them on either side of the proscenium, and, after various preliminary jokes, confides to the spectators that in the two sacks moral and æsthetic sand is to be found which the actors will very frequently throw into their eyes. One is filled with good deeds which cost nothing, and the other with magnificently expressed sentiments which had no meaning behind them. He withdrew unwillingly and sometimes came back, exhorted the spectators earnestly to attend to his warning and shut their eyes, reminded them how he had always been their friend and had meant well with them—with many more things of like kind. This prologue was at once acted in the room by friend Horn, but the joke remained quite among ourselves, no copy was taken of it, and the paper

was soon lost. Horn, however, who had performed the harlequin very prettily, had the idea of enlarging my poem to Händel by several verses, and making it refer chiefly to "Medon." He read it aloud to us, and we could not take any pleasure in it, because we did not find the additions even intelligent, and the first poem, being written in quite a different sense, appeared to us disfigured. Our friend, discontented with our indifference, or rather censure, may have shown it to others who found it new and amusing. Copies were now made of it, to which the reputation of Clodius's "Medon" gave at once a rapid publicity. General disapproval was the consequence, and the originators (it was soon found out that the poem had proceeded from our clique) were severely blamed, for since Cronegk's and Rost's attacks upon Gottsched nothing of the kind had been seen. We had, besides, already earlier secluded ourselves, and now found ourselves quite in the case of the owls against the other birds. In Dresden, too, they did not like the affair, and it had for us serious, if not unpleasant, consequences. Count Lindenau for some time had not been quite content with his son's tutor. For though the young man was in no way neglected, and Behrisch kept himself either in the young count's room or at least close to it, when the instructors gave their daily lessons, regularly frequented the lectures with him, never went out in the daytime without him, accompanied him also on all his walks, yet the rest of us were always to be found in Apel's house, and joined them whenever they went on a pleasure ramble; this had already excited attention. Behrisch, too, accustomed himself to us, at last towards nine o'clock in the evening he mostly gave his pupil into the hands of the chamberlain, and sought us out in the tavern, to which, however, he never used to come but in shoes and stockings, his sword at his side, and usually his hat under his arm. The jokes and fooleries which he generally started went on *ad infinitum*. Thus, for example, one of our friends had the habit of going away punctually at ten o'clock because he was intimate with a pretty girl with whom he could only converse at this hour. We did not like to lose him, and Behrisch determined secretly one evening, when we were very happily together, not to let him go away this time. On the stroke of ten the other stood



up and took his leave. Behrisch called out to him and asked him to wait a moment, because he wanted to go with him. Now he began in the most charming manner first to look after his sword, which stood just before his eyes, and behaved himself so awkwardly in buckling it on that he could never manage it. At first, too, he did it so naturally that no ~~one~~ took offence at it. But when he, to vary the subject, at last went further so that the sword came now on his right and now between his legs, a general laughter arose, in which the man, who was in a hurry, who was also a merry fellow, joined in, and let Behrisch go his own way until the happy hour of lovers was past, then for the first time there followed general pleasure and amusing conversation till deep into the night.

Unfortunately, Behrisch had, and we through him, a certain other inclination for some girls who were better than their reputation, but by which our own reputation could not be improved. We had often been seen in their garden, and we directed our walks thither when the young count was with us. All this may have been treasured up and at last related to the father ; suffice it to say, he sought to get rid of the tutor in an indulgent manner, to whom indeed it turned out fortunate. His good exterior, his knowledge and talents, his integrity—which no one would call in question—had gained for him the affection and respect of distinguished persons, on whose recommendation he was appointed tutor to the Hereditary Prince of Dessau, and found a solid happiness at the court of a prince who was excellent in every respect.

The loss of a friend like Behrisch was for me of the greatest significance. He had spoilt me, while he cultivated me : and his presence was necessary if that which he had found good to expend on me was to bring forth fruit for society. He knew how to stir me up to all kinds of pretty and agreeable things which were appropriate, and to bring out my social talents. But because I had gained no self-dependence in such things, so, when I was alone again, I quickly relapsed into my morose and stubborn disposition, which always increased the more discontented I was with those about me, as I imagined that they were not contented with me. With the most arbitrary caprice I took offence at what might have been reckoned as an advantage to me,

thus alienated many with whom I had hitherto stood on a tolerable footing, and on account of the many disagreeable things which I had drawn on myself and others, whether by doing or leaving undone, by doing too much or too little, was obliged to hear the remarks from my well-wishers that I lacked experience. The same thing was said to me by every one of sound sense who saw my productions, especially when they had reference to the external world. I observed this as well as I could, but in it little that was edifying, and was still always obliged to add enough of my own to make it only tolerable. I had often, too, pressed my friend Behrisch that he should make clear to me what experience might be. But, because he was full of nonsense, he put me off from one day to another, and at last disclosed to me, after great preparations, that true experience was properly when one experiences how an experienced man must experience in experiencing his experience. Now when we scolded him outrageously and called him to account for this, he assured us that a great mystery lay hidden behind these words, that we should first understand when we had experience, and so on without end—for it cost him nothing to continue talking by the quarter of an hour—since the experiencer would always become more experienced and at last come to true experience. When we despaired of such fooleries, he assured us that he had learnt this way of making himself clear and impressive from the latest and greatest authors, who had made us observe how one can rest a restful rest, and how silence in being silent can always become more silent.

By chance an officer who came among us on leave was praised in good society as a remarkable, experienced man of good sense, who had fought through the Seven Years' War and gained for himself universal confidence. It was not difficult for me to approach him, and we often took walks together. The idea of experience had almost become fixed in my brain, and the craving to make it clear to myself passionate. Open-hearted as I was, I disclosed to him the unrest in which I found myself. He smiled, and was kind enough, in consequence of my questions, to tell me something of his life and, generally, of the world immediately about us, from which at last little better came out but that experience convinces us that our best thoughts, wishes, and

projects are unattainable, and that he who cherishes such fancies and expresses them with eagerness, is especially regarded as an inexperienced man.

As, however, he was a gallant, excellent fellow, he assured me that he had not yet quite given up these fancies, and felt himself still tolerably well off with the little faith, love, and hope which remained. He felt obliged to tell me a great deal about the war, about the sort of life in the field, of skirmishes and battles, especially in so far as he had taken part in them ; for these tremendous events acquired a quite strange aspect when considered in relation to a single individual. I led him on to an open narration of the late relations of the Court, which seemed to be quite legendary. I heard of the bodily strength of Augustus II.,<sup>1</sup> of his numerous children and his enormous expenses, then of his successor's fondness for art and of making collections, of Count Brühl and his boundless love of magnificence, some of which seemed almost devoid of taste, of his numerous banquets and gorgeous amusements, which were all cut off by Frederick's invasions of Saxony. The royal castles now lay in ruins, the splendours of Brühl destroyed, and of the whole, a glorious land, much injured, alone remained.

When he saw me astonished at that senseless enjoyment of fortune and then grieved over the calamity which followed, and informed me that one expects from an experienced man just this, that he shall be astonished at neither of these two things, nor take too lively an interest in them, I felt a great desire to continue a while longer in my hitherto state of inexperience, in which desire he strengthened me and very urgently entreated me, for the present at least, always to cling to agreeable experiences, and to try to avoid the disagreeable ones as much as possible if they were to intrude themselves on me. But once when the discussion was again about experience in general, and I related to him those ludicrous phrases of my friend Behrisch, he shook his head, laughed, and said : " There, one sees how it is with words which are only once uttered ! These sound so comical, nay, so silly, that it would seem impossible to put a rational meaning into them, and yet perhaps an attempt might be made." And when I pressed him, he replied in his in-

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<sup>1</sup> August the Strong, 1670-1733, Elector of Saxony.

telligent, cheerful manner : “ If you will allow me, while I comment on and complete your friend, to continue after his fashion, I think he meant to say that experience is nothing else than that one experiences what one does not wish to experience, which is what it amounts to, for the most part, at least in this world.”

## BOOK VIII

ANOTHER man, though infinitely different from Behrisch in every respect, could yet in a certain sense be compared with him ; I mean Oeser, who also belonged to those men who dream away their life in a comfortable state of being busy. His friends even confessed secretly that with very fine natural powers he had not spent his younger years in sufficient activity, and therefore had never arrived at practising his art with complete technique. Yet a certain diligence appeared to be reserved for his old age, and during the many years that I knew him he was not lacking in power of invention or industry. He had attracted me much at the first moment ; even his residence, strange and mysterious, was for me highly charming. In the old Pleissenburg castle, at the right-hand corner, one ascended a repaired, cheerful, winding staircase. The halls of the drawing academy, of which he was Director, were found on the left, and were light and spacious, but he himself had to be reached through a narrow, dark passage, at the end of which one first sought the entrance to his rooms, having just passed between rows of them and an extensive granary. The first apartment was adorned with pictures from the later Italian School, by masters whose grace he used highly to commend. Since I had taken private lessons from him with some noblemen, we were allowed to draw here, and we often penetrated into his adjoining private cabinet, which contained at the same time his few books, collections of art and natural curiosities, and what might have chiefly interested him. Everything was arranged with taste, simple, and in such a way that the small space contained a great deal. The furniture, cupboards, portfolios, were elegant without affectation or superfluity. Thus the first thing which he recommended to us, and to which he always recurred, was simplicity in everything which art and manual labour united are called upon to produce. As a declared enemy of the scroll and shell

style, and of the whole taste for the baroque he showed us in copper-plates and drawings, old patterns, of the sort in contrast with better decorations and simpler forms of furniture, as well as with other appurtenances of a room, and because everything about him harmonised with these maxims, his words and teachings made upon us a good and lasting impression. Besides this, he had the opportunity of letting us see his intentions in practice, since he stood in good reputation with private and official persons, and was asked for his advice about new buildings and alterations. Above all, he seemed more inclined on occasions for preparing something for a certain end and use than for undertaking and completing things which exist for themselves and require a greater perfection; he was therefore always ready and at hand where the publishers required greater or smaller copper-plates for any work; thus the vignettes to Winckelmann's first writings were etched by him. But he often made only very sketchy drawings, to which Geyser<sup>1</sup> knew very well how to adapt himself. His figures had throughout something universal, not to say ideal, about them. His women were pleasing and agreeable, his children naïve enough, only with men he could not succeed, who, in his truly intellectual but always misty and at the same time foreshortening manner, had for the most part the look of Lazzaroni. Since he designed his compositions above all less with regard to form than to light, shade, and masses, the general effect was good, as indeed all that he did and produced was accompanied by a peculiar grace. As at the same time he neither could nor would control a deep-rooted affection for the great and the allegorical, which awakens a secondary thought, so his words always gave something to think about, and were complete through a conception, though they could not be so according to art and execution. This bias, which is always dangerous, often led him to the limits of good taste, if not beyond them. His purposes he often sought to attain by the strangest ideas and by whimsical jests; indeed, to his best works there was always lent a touch of humour. If the public was not always content with such things, he revenged himself by a new and still more strange piece of nonsense. Thus he afterwards exhibited in the

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<sup>1</sup> Copper-plate engraver, 1740-1803.

ante-chamber of the great concert hall, an ideal female figure in his own style, who was raising a pair of snuffers to a taper, and he was extraordinarily pleased when he was able to cause a dispute on the question, whether this singular muse intended to snuff the light or to extinguish it, whereby he roguishly allowed all kinds of queer secondary thoughts to peep out. But the building of the new theatre in my time made the greatest sensation, in which his curtain, when it was still quite new, certainly had an uncommonly charming effect. Oeser had taken the muses out of the clouds, on which they usually hover on such occasions, and set them upon the earth. A vestibule to the Temple of Fame was adorned by the statues of Sophocles and Aristophanes, around whom all the more modern dramatic writers were assembled. Here, too, the goddesses of the arts were likewise present, and everything was dignified and beautiful. But now comes the strange thing! Through the open centre was seen the portal of the distant temple, and a man in a light jerkin was passing between the two above-mentioned groups without troubling himself about them, straight up to the temple; he was seen from behind, and was not specially distinguished. This was to represent Shakespeare, who, without predecessors or followers, without troubling himself about models, went in his own way to meet immortality. This work was executed on the great floor over the new theatre. We often gathered ourselves round him there, and in that place I read aloud to him the proof-sheets of "Musalem."

As regards myself, I did not advance any further in the practice of art. His teaching influenced our mind and our taste, but his own drawing was too indefinite to guide me, who had only groped along by the objects of art and Nature, to a severe and decided practice. Of the faces and bodies, he delivered to us rather the aspect than the forms, more the gestures than the proportions. He gave us the conceptions of the figures, and required that they should become living realities for us. That might have been beautiful and proper if he had not had mere beginners before him. If one must on this account deny to him a pre-eminent talent for instruction, one must admit that he was very clever and politic, and that a fortunate adroitness of mind qualified him quite peculiarly for a teacher in a higher sense. The

deficiencies under which each one laboured, he clearly saw ; he disdained, however, to reprove them directly, and rather hinted his praise and blame indirectly and very laconically. One was compelled to think over the matter, and quickly came to a further insight about many things. For example, I had very carefully executed a bunch of flowers on a blue paper, and partly with the stump, partly with botching, had tried to give effect to the small picture. After I had been long labouring in this way, he came behind me once and said : " More paper," whereupon he at once withdrew. My neighbour and I racked our brains as to what this could mean, for my bouquet on a large half-sheet had quite enough space around it. After we had reflected on it for a long time, we thought at last we had found his meaning, when we noticed that I, by working in and out the black and the white, had quite covered up the blue ground, destroyed the middle tint, and had in fact with great industry produced a disagreeable drawing. Besides this, he did not fail to instruct us in perspective and in light and shade sufficiently indeed, but always so that we had to make an effort and torment ourselves in order to find the application of the principles which he delivered. Probably his intention was, as there was no question of our becoming artists, only to cultivate our insight and taste, and make us acquainted with the requirements of a work of art without actually demanding that we should produce one. Since, moreover, industry was not my affair, for nothing gave me pleasure except what came to me at once, so by degrees I became, if not lazy, yet discouraged, and because knowledge is more easy than doing, I was quite pleased to follow, wherever he thought to lead in his own way.

At this time the "Lives of the Painters,"<sup>1</sup> by D'Argenville, was translated into German. I obtained it quite fresh, and studied it assiduously enough. This seemed to please Oeser, and he procured for us an opportunity of seeing many a portfolio out of the great Leipsic collections, and then guided us to the history of art. But even these exercises produced in me an effect different from what he had in mind. The numerous subjects which I saw treated by artists awakened in me the poetic talent, and as one

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<sup>1</sup> "Abrégé de la vie des plus fameux peintres."



easily makes an engraving for a poem, so I now made poems for the engravings and drawings, by managing to represent to myself the personalities introduced in them, in their previous and subsequent condition, soon also to compose a little song which might have suited them, and thus accustomed myself to consider the arts in connection with ~~one~~ another; even the mistakes which I made, so that my poems were often descriptive, were useful to me in the sequel, when I came to more reflection, as they made me attentive to the difference between the arts. Of such small things many were in the collection which Behrisch had arranged; but there is nothing left of them now.

The atmosphere of art and taste in which Oeser lived, and into which one was drawn so long as one visited him diligently, was all the more dignified and delightful because he was fond of remembering departed or absent persons, with whom he had been or still was on good terms; for if he had once given anyone his esteem, he remained unalterable in his behaviour to him, and always showed himself equally friendly.

After we had heard Caylus pre-eminently extolled among the French, he made us also acquainted with Germans who were active in this department. Thus we learned that Professor Christ,<sup>1</sup> as an amateur, a collector, connoisseur, a fellow-labourer, had done good service for art, and had applied his learning to the true improvement of the same. Heinecke, on the other hand, could not be favourably mentioned, partly because he devoted himself too assiduously to the all too childish beginnings of German art, which Oeser little valued, partly because he had once treated Winckelmann not nicely, which could never be forgiven him. Our attention, however, was strangely drawn to the labour of Lippert,<sup>2</sup> since our teacher knew how to set forth his merits sufficiently. "For," he said, "though statues and larger groups of sculpture remain the foundation and summit of all knowledge of art, yet they are seldom to be seen either as originals or casts; on the contrary, by Lippert a little world of gems is made known, in which the more comprehensive merit of the ancients, their happy invention,

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<sup>1</sup> 1700-56; one of the founders of the Science of Antiquities in Germany.

<sup>2</sup> 1702-85; Curator of Antiques in the Dresden Art Gallery, famous for his collection of gems.

judicious composition, tasteful treatment, are made more striking and intelligible, also from the great number of them comparison is more possible." While now we were busying ourselves with these as much as was allowed, the lofty life of art of Winckelmann in Italy was pointed out, and we took his first writings in hand with devotion ; for Oeser had a passionate reverence for him, which he was easily able to instil into us. The problematical part of those little treatises, which are, besides, confused even by their irony, and because they refer to opinions and events quite peculiar, we were indeed unable to decipher ; but as Oeser had great influence, and unceasingly gave them out to us as the gospel of the beautiful and still more of the tasteful and the pleasing, we found out the general sense again, and fancied that with such interpretations we should go on the more securely, as we regarded it no small happiness to draw from the same fountain from which Winckelmann had allayed his earliest thirst.

No greater good fortune can befall a city than when several educated men, like-minded in what is good and right, live together in it. Leipsic had this advantage, and enjoyed it the more peacefully as so many differences of judgment had not as yet manifested themselves. Huber, a print collector and well-experienced connoisseur, had besides the thankfully acknowledged merit of having thought to make the value of German literature known even to the French ; Kreuchauff, an amateur with a practised eye, who as a friend of the whole art society might regard all collections as his own ; Winkler, who very willingly shared with others the intelligent delight which he cherished for his treasures ; many others who joined us—all lived and laboured with one feeling, and I cannot remember, often as I was allowed to be present when they examined works of art, that a dispute ever arose ; the school from which the artist proceeded, the time in which he lived, the peculiar talent which Nature had bestowed on him, the degree of excellence to which he had carried it out, were always brought into fair consideration. There was no predilection for spiritual or secular subjects, for landscape or city views, for animate or inanimate ; the question always was about what was in accordance with art.

Now though these amateurs and collectors from their

situation, modes of thought, abilities, and opportunities, inclined more to the Dutch school, yet while one practised one's eye on the endless merits of the north-western artists, a longing, reverential look was always kept open to the south-east.

And so the University, where I neglected the aims of my family—and, indeed, my own, was to ground me in that where I was to find the greatest satisfaction of my life; the impression of those localities, too, in which I received such important incitements has always remained most dear and precious. The old Pleissenburg, the rooms of the Academy, but above all Oeser's abode, no less the collections of Winkler and Richter, I have also vividly present to me.

A young man, however, while older persons are conversing with each other about things already familiar to them, is instructed only incidentally, and as for him the most difficult part of the business, that of rightly arranging everything, yet remains, he cannot but find himself in a very painful situation. I therefore, as well as others, looked about with longing for some new light, which was indeed to come to us through a man to whom we already owed so much. In two ways can the mind be highly delighted—namely, by perception and conception. But the former requires a worthy object which is not always at hand, and a culture in proportion, to which one does not immediately attain. Conception, on the other hand, only requires susceptibility; it brings its subject-matter with it, and is itself the instrument of culture. Therefore, that beam of light was highly welcome to us which the most excellent thinker brought down to us through dark clouds. One must be a young man in order to realise the effect which Lessing's "Laocoon"<sup>1</sup> exercised upon us, since this work transported us out of the region of a scanty perception into the open fields of thought. The phrase so long misunderstood, *ut pictura poesis*,<sup>2</sup> was at once laid aside, the difference between plastic art and the "belles-lettres" made clear, the summits of the two now appeared separated, however near their bases might touch one another. The plastic artist must keep himself within the limits of the beautiful, if to the artist in language, who

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<sup>1</sup> Published in 1766.

<sup>2</sup> "As is a picture so is a poem" (Horace, "Ars Poetica," 361).

cannot dispense with the significant in any kind, it is allowed to ramble abroad beyond them. The former labours for the outer sense, which is only satisfied by the beautiful; the latter for the imagination, which may even come to terms with the ugly. All the consequences of this splendid thought became illuminated for us as by a lightning flash; all the criticism which had hitherto guided and judged was flung aside like a worn-out coat. We considered ourselves freed from all evil, and thought we might venture to look down with some compassion on the otherwise so splendid sixteenth century in which in German sculptures and poems one knew how to represent life only under the form of a fool hung with bells, death under the misformed shape of a rattling skeleton, and the necessary and accidental evils of the world under the image of the caricatured devil. Most of all, we were enchanted with the beauty of that thought that the ancients regarded death as the brother of sleep and had represented both alike so as to be interchangeable, as becomes *Menæchmi*.<sup>1</sup> Here we could first highly honour the triumph of the beautiful and banish the ugly of every kind into the low sphere of the ridiculous in the kingdom of art, since it was not to be driven out of the world. The splendour of such leading and fundamental conceptions appears only to the mind upon which they exercise their infinite activity—appears only to the age in which, after being longed for, they come forth at the right moment. Then those, for whom such nourishment is provided, fondly occupy whole periods of their lives with it, and rejoice in an inexhaustible growth, while men are not wanting, who on the spot resist such an effect, nor others, who afterwards haggle and cavil at its high meaning.

But as conception and perception mutually require one another, I could not long work up these new thoughts without an infinite desire arising within me to see once for all important works of art in great numbers. I therefore determined to visit Dresden without delay. I was not in want of the necessary cash, but there were other difficulties to overcome, which I still further unnecessarily increased by my whimsical disposition; for I kept my project secret from every one, as I wished to contemplate the treasures of

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<sup>1</sup> Refers to a play of Plautus—*The Twins*.

art there quite in my own way and, as I thought, wanted no one to perplex me. Apart from this, so simple a matter became more complicated by another eccentricity.

We have weaknesses both by birth and upbringing, and it may well be a question which of the two give us most trouble. Willingly as I made myself acquainted with every kind of circumstances, and had had many an inducement to do so, an excessive aversion from all inns had been instilled into me by my father. On his journeys through Italy, France, and Germany, this feeling had firmly taken root in him. Though he seldom spoke in metaphors, and only called them to his assistance when he was very cheerful, yet he often used to repeat that at the gate of an inn he always thought he saw a large spider's web spread out, so ingeniously that the insects could indeed fly in, but even the privileged wasps could not fly out again unplucked. It seemed to him horrible that one had to renounce one's own habits and all that was dear to one in life, and to live after the manner of the landlord and waiters and be obliged to pay immoderately. He praised the hospitality of olden times, and though he reluctantly endured anything unusual in the house, he yet practised hospitality, especially towards artists and virtuosi; thus our intimate friend Seekatz always had his quarters with us, and Abel, the last musician who handled the bass viol with success and applause, was well received and entertained. How could I, with such youthful impressions which nothing hitherto had rubbed off, decide to enter an inn in a foreign town? Nothing would have been easier than to have found quarters with good friends: Hofrath Krebel, Assessor Hermann, and others had already often spoken to me about it, but even to these my journey was to remain a secret, and I hit upon a most strange idea. My next-door neighbour, the diligent theologian, whose eyes unfortunately were ever growing weaker, had a relation in Dresden, a shoemaker, with whom from time to time he exchanged letters. This man for a long time already had been for me highly remarkable on account of his utterances, and the arrival of one of his letters was always celebrated by us as a festival. The way in which he answered the complaints of his cousin, who feared blindness, was quite peculiar, for he did not trouble himself about grounds of consolation, which are always difficult to find; but the

cheerful way in which he regarded his own narrow, poor, toilsome life, the amusement which he drew even from evils and inconveniences, the indestructible conviction that life in and for itself was a good thing, communicated itself to him who read the letter, and, for a few moments at least, transformed him into a like mood. Enthusiastic as I was, I had often sent greetings to this man, praised his happy natural gift, and expressed the wish to become acquainted with him. All this being presupposed, nothing seemed to me more natural than to seek him out, converse with him—nay, to live with him and get to know him quite intimately. My good divinity student, after some opposition, gave me a letter written with difficulty, and I went, my matriculation paper in my pocket, full of longing, in the yellow coach to Dresden.

I looked for my shoemaker, and found him soon in the suburb. Sitting upon his stool, he received me in a friendly way, and said, laughing, after he had read the letter : “ I see from this, young sir, that you are a singular Christian.” “ How so, master ? ” replied I. “ By ‘ singular ’ nothing bad is meant,” he continued ; “ one calls every one so who is not consistent with himself, and I call you a singular Christian because you confess yourself a follower of the Lord in one point, but not in another.” On my requesting him to enlighten me, he said further : “ It seems that your intention is to announce glad tidings to the poor and lowly ; that is good, and this imitation of the Lord is praiseworthy. But you should reflect besides that He rather sat down to table with prosperous and rich people, where there was good fare, and that He did not despise the sweet scent of the ointment, of which you will find the opposite in my house.”

This pleasant beginning put me at once in good humour, and we rallied one another for some time. His wife stood doubtful how she should board and lodge such a guest. Here, too, he had very pretty ideas, which referred not only to the Bible but to Gottfried’s “ Chronicle,” and when we were agreed that I should stay, I gave my purse, such as it was, to the hostess to keep, and bade her, if she wanted anything, to provide herself from it. When he would have declined it, and with some roguishness gave me to understand that he was not so penniless as it might seem, I disarmed him by saying : “ Even if it were only to change

water into wine, such a well-tried domestic resource would not be out of place, since to-day miracles no longer happen." The hostess seemed to find my talk and conduct less and less strange ; we soon adapted ourselves to one another, and passed a very pleasant evening. He remained always the same, because everything flowed from one source. His peculiarity was a sound common sense, which rested upon a cheerful disposition, and took delight in uniform, habitual activity. That he laboured incessantly was his first and most necessary care ; that he regarded everything else non-essential—this preserved his comfortable frame of mind ; and I must count him before many others among those who are called practical philosophers, unconscious sages. The hour at which the gallery was to be opened, awaited with impatience, appeared. I entered into this sanctuary, and my amazement exceeded every conception which I had formed. This circular room, in which splendour and neatness reigned with the deepest stillness, the dazzling frames all nearer to the time in which they had been gilded, the waxed floor, the spaces trodden more by spectators than used by copyists, gave a feeling of solemnity, unique of its kind, which so much more resembled the feeling with which one enters a church, as the adornments of so many a temple, the objects of so much adoration, seemed here to be set up only for the sacred purpose of art. I readily put up with the cursory description of my guide, only I requested that I might be allowed to remain in the outer gallery. Here, to my delight, I found myself really at home. I had already seen the works of several artists, others I knew from engravings, others by name. I did not conceal this, and thus I inspired my guide with some confidence ; nay, the rapture which I expressed at some pictures where the pencil gained the victory over Nature delighted him, for it was such things principally which attracted me, where the comparison with known Nature must necessarily enhance the value of art.

When I again entered my shoemaker's home to dinner, I could scarcely believe my eyes, for I thought I saw before me a picture by Ostade, so perfect that one could only hang it up in the gallery. The position of the objects, the light, the shadow, the brownish tint of the whole, the magical harmony, everything which one admires in these pictures I saw here in reality. It was the first time that I became

aware in so high a degree of a gift which I afterwards exercised with more consciousness, namely, that of seeing Nature with the eyes of that artist to whose works I had devoted a particular attention. This faculty has afforded me much enjoyment, but has also increased my desire zealously to indulge from time to time in the practice of a talent which Nature seemed to have denied me.

I visited the gallery at all permitted hours, and continued to express too loud my ecstasy at many previous works. I thus frustrated my laudable purpose of remaining unknown and unnoticed ; and whereas hitherto only one of the under-keepers had occupied himself with me, now the Gallery Inspector, Councillor Reidel, took notice of me, and drew my attention to much which chiefly seemed to be within my sphere. I found this excellent man at that time just as active and obliging as when I afterwards saw him throughout many years, and as he shows himself to this day. His image has interwoven itself for me so closely with those art treasures that I can never see the two apart ; indeed, his memory has accompanied me to Italy, where in many large and rich collections his presence would have been very desirable.

As one cannot regard such work even with strangers and unknown persons silently and without mutual sympathy, still more is the first sight of them disposed to open hearts to one another, so I came there into conversation with a young man who appeared to be staying in Dresden and to belong to a Legation. He invited me to come in the evening to an inn where a lively company met, and where, as each one paid a moderate reckoning, one could pass some very pleasant hours.

I made my appearance without meeting the company, and the waiter surprised me somewhat when he delivered the compliments of the gentleman who had made the arrangement with me, with the excuse that he would come later, adding that I must not take offence at anything which might occur, also that I should have nothing to pay beyond my own score. I knew not what to make of these words, but my father's spider's web came into my mind, and I collected myself to await whatever might befall. The company assembled, my acquaintance introduced me, and I could not pay attention for long without finding that they



were aiming at the mystification of a young man who showed himself to be a novice by a noisy, presumptuous behaviour ; I therefore kept very much on my guard that they might not find amusement in selecting me as his companion. At table their intention became more apparent to every one, except to himself. They drank deeper and deeper, and when a *vivat* in honour of his sweetheart was started, every one solemnly swore that there should never be another drink out of those glasses ; they flung them behind them, and this was the signal for still greater follies. At last I withdrew quite quietly, and the waiter, while demanding a very moderate reckoning, requested me to come again as they did not go on so wildly every evening. I was far from my lodgings, and it was nearly midnight when I reached them. I found the door unlocked, everybody was in bed, and one lamp illuminated the narrow domestic household, where my eye, ever more practised, immediately perceived the finest picture by Schalken, from which I could not tear myself away, so that it banished from me all sleep.

The few days of my stay in Dresden were solely devoted to the picture-gallery. The antiquities still stood in the pavilion of the great garden, but I declined seeing them, as well as all the other precious things which Dresden contained, being only too full of the conviction that, even in and about the collection of paintings, much must still remain hidden from me. Thus I took the excellence of the Italian masters more on trust and in faith than by being able to claim any insight into them. What I could not look upon as Nature, put in the place of Nature, and compare with a known object, was without effect upon me. It is the material impression which makes the beginning even for every more elevated love of art.

I got on quite well with my shoemaker. He was witty and versatile enough, and we vied with each other many times in many conceits. Nevertheless, a man who thinks himself happy, and demands of others that they should do the same, makes us dissatisfied ; indeed, the repetition of such sentiments produces weariness. I found myself well occupied, entertained, stimulated, but in no way happy, and the shoes from his last would not fit me. We parted, however, as the best of friends ; and even my hostess on my departure was not discontented with me.

Shortly before my departure something very pleasant was to happen. By the instrumentality of that young man, who wished to restore himself to some credit with me, I was introduced to the Director Von Hagedorn, who with great kindness showed me his collection, and was highly delighted with the enthusiasm of the young lover of art. He was, as becomes a connoisseur, quite peculiarly in love with the pictures which he possessed, and therefore seldom found in others an interest such as he wished. It gave him particular joy that a picture by Schwanefeld gave me pleasure beyond measure, that I was not tired of praising and extolling it in each particular part, for landscapes which reminded me of the beautiful clear sky under which I had grown up, the luxurious vegetation of those regions and whatever other favours a warmer climate offers to man, affected me most in the imitation, while they awakened in me a yearning remembrance.

These precious experiences, preparing both mind and sense for true art, were, nevertheless, interrupted and damped by one of the most melancholy sights—by the destroyed and desolate condition of so many streets of Dresden through which I took my way. The Mohrenstrasse in ruins, as well as the Church of the Cross (*Kreuzkirche*) with its shattered tower, impressed themselves deeply on me, and stand still as a gloomy spot in my imagination. From the cupola of the Church of Our Lady (*Frauenkirche*) I saw these pitiable ruins scattered about amid the beautiful order of the city ; here the sexton commended to me the art of the architect who had already fitted up church and cupola for so undesirable an event, and had built them bomb-proof. The good sacristan then pointed out to me the ruins on all sides, and said doubtfully and laconically : “ The enemy has done this.” Now then, at last, I turned back to Leipsic, though unwillingly, and found my friends, who were not accustomed to such excursions on my part, in great astonishment, busied with all kinds of conjectures as to what my mysterious journey might mean. When upon this I told them my story quite in order, they declared that such was only a made-up tale, and acutely tried to get to the bottom of the riddle, which I had been mischievous enough to conceal under my shoemaker’s lodgings.

But had they been able to see into my heart, they would

have discovered no mischief there ; for the truth of that old saying, "Increase of knowledge is increase of sorrow," had struck me with all its force, and the more effort I made to bring into order and appropriate to myself that which I had seen, the less did I succeed. I had at last to content myself with a quiet after-effect. Ordinary life took hold of me ~~again~~, and I at last felt myself quite comfortable when a friendly intercourse, increase in branches of knowledge which were suitable to me, and a certain practice of the hand occupied me in a manner less important but more in accordance with my powers.

Very pleasant and wholesome for me was the connection which I formed with the Breitkopf family. Bernhard Christoph Breitkopf, the proper founder of the family, who had come to Leipsic as a poor journeyman printer, was still living, and occupied the "Golden Bear," a respectable building in the Newmarket, with Gottsched as an inmate. The son, Johann Gottlob Immanuel, had been already long married, and was the father of several children. They thought they could not better spend a part of their considerable property than by putting up a large new house, "The Silver Bear," opposite the first one, which was laid out on a higher and more extensive scale than the original house. Just at the time of the building I became acquainted with the family. The eldest son may have been somewhat older than I was, a well-formed young man, devoted to music and practised in playing skilfully both on the piano and violin. The second, a true, good soul, also musical, enlivened the concerts, which were often got up, no less than his elder brother. They were both friendly to me as well as their parents and sisters. I lent them a helping hand during the building-up and the finishing, the furnishing and moving in, and thus formed a conception of much that belongs to such an affair. I had also an opportunity of seeing Oeser's teachings put in practice. In the new home which I there saw arise, I was often a visitor. We had many pursuits in common, and the eldest set some of my songs to music, which when printed bore his name, but not mine, and have been little known. I have selected the best and inserted them among my other little poems. The father had invented or perfected musical type. He permitted me the use of a fine library which related mostly to the origin

and progress of printing, and thus I gained some knowledge in that department. I found there, moreover, good copperplates which exhibited antiquity and advanced also my studies on this side, which were still further promoted by the fact that a considerable collection of sulphur casts had fallen into disorder during the move. I set them right again as well as I could, and in so doing was compelled to search in Lippert and other authorities. A physician, Dr Reichel, likewise an inmate of the house, I consulted from time to time, when I felt, if not ill, yet unwell, and thus we led together a quiet, pleasant life.

In this house I was now to enter upon another kind of connection, for the copperplate engraver, Stock, had moved into the attic. He was a native of Nuremberg, a very diligent man, and in his labours precise and methodical. He also engraved, like Geyser, after Oeser's designs, larger and smaller plates which came more and more into vogue for novels and poems. He etched very neatly, so that his work from the *aqua fortis* came out almost finished, and with the graver, too, which he handled very well, only a little remained to be done. He made an exact calculation how long a plate would occupy him, and nothing could call him from his work when he had not completed his daily allotted task. Thus he sat at a broad work-table by the great gable window in a very neat and orderly room, where his wife and two daughters afforded him domestic society. Of these last, one is happily married and the other is an excellent artist; they have continued my friends all my life long. I now divided my time between the upper and lower stories, and attached myself much to the man, who, together with his persistent diligence, possessed an excellent humour and was good nature itself. The technical neatness of this branch of art charmed me, and I associated myself with him in order to execute something of the kind. My inclination was again directed towards landscape which, while it amused me in my solitary walks, seemed in itself more attainable, and in works of art more comprehensible, than the human figure, which deterred me. Under his guidance, therefore, I etched various landscapes after Thiele and others, which, though executed by an unpractised hand, yet made some effect and were well received. The preparation of the plates, the putting in the high lights of the

same, the etching, and, finally, the biting with *aqua fortis*, gave me varied occupation, and I had soon advanced so far that I could assist my master in many things. I did not lack the attention necessary for the biting, and seldom did anything go wrong with me, but I had not foresight enough to guard against deleterious vapours which are wont to develop on such occasions, and they may well have contributed to the maladies which afterwards troubled me for a long time amid such labours ; so that everything might be tried, I often made woodcuts also. I completed various small printing blocks after the French patterns, and many of them were found fit for use.

Let me now make mention of some other men who resided in Leipsic or sojourned there for a short time. Weisse, the custom-house collector for the district, in his best years cheerful, friendly, and obliging, was by us loved and esteemed. We would not indeed allow his theatrical pieces to be models throughout, but we allowed ourselves to be carried away by them, and his operas, set to music by Hiller in an easy style, afforded us great pleasure. Schiebeler, of Hamburg, pursued the same course, and his " Lisuard " and " Dariolette " were alike favoured by us. Eschenburg, a handsome young man only a little older than we were, distinguished himself advantageously among the students. Zachariä was pleased to spend some weeks among us, and being introduced by his brother, dined with us at the same table. As was right, we deemed it an honour to gratify our guest in return by a few extra dishes, richer dessert, and choicer wine, for as a tall, well-built, comfortable man, he did not conceal his liking for a good table. Lessing came at a time when we had I know not what in our heads ; it was our delight to go nowhere to please him, nay, even to avoid the places to which he came, probably because we thought ourselves too good to stand at a distance, and could make no claim to come into a nearer intimacy with him. This momentary silliness, which is not unusual with presumptuous and freakish youth, in the sequel proved its own punishment, for I have never set eyes on that eminent man who was highly esteemed by me.

With all our efforts, however, in regard to art and antiquity, each of us had always Winckelmann before his eyes, whose ability was acknowledged with enthusiasm in

his fatherland. We diligently read his writings, and tried to make ourselves acquainted with the circumstances under which he had written the first of them. We found in them many views which seemed to be derived from Oeser, nay, even jests and fancies after his fashion ; we did not rest until we had made a general conception of the occasion on which these remarkable and sometimes so enigmatical writings had arisen, though we were not very accurate ; for youth likes rather to be excited than instructed, and it was not the last time that I had to thank the Sibylline books for an important step in cultivation. It was then a fine period in literature, where eminent men were yet treated with respect, though the disputes of Klotz and Lessing's controversies already indicated that this epoch would soon close. Winckelmann enjoyed such a universal, unassailable reverence, and one knows how sensitive he was towards anything public which did not seem in accordance with his deeply felt dignity. All periodicals joined in his praise ; the better class of travellers came back from him instructed and enraptured, and the new views which he gave extended themselves over science and life. The Prince of Dessau had raised himself up to a similar degree of respect. Young, well and nobly minded, he had, on his travels and at other times, showed himself truly desirable. Winckelmann was in the highest degree delighted with him, and whenever he mentioned him, loaded him with the handsomest of epithets. The laying out of a park, at that time unique, the taste for architecture which Von Erdmannsdorf supported by his activity, all spoke in favour of a prince, who, while he was a shining example for the rest, gave promise of a golden age for his servants and subjects. Now, we young people heard with joy that Winckelmann was coming back from Italy to visit his princely friend, to call on Oeser by the way, and so come within our sphere of vision. We made no pretensions to speaking with him, but we hoped to see him, and as at that time of life one willingly changes every occasion into a party of pleasure, we had already arranged a journey to Dessau, where in a beautiful region made glorious by art, in a land well governed, and at the same time externally adorned, we thought to watch, now here, now there, in order to see with our own eyes these so highly exalted men walking about. Oeser himself was quite elated

when he thought about it, and the news of Winckelmann's death fell among us like a thunderbolt from a clear sky. I still remember the spot where I first heard it ; it was in the court of the Pleissenburg, not far from the little gate through which one went up to Oeser's house. One of my fellow-pupils came up to me and said that Oeser could not be spoken ~~with~~, and the reason why. This monstrous event had a monstrous effect ; there was a universal mourning and lamentation, and his untimely death sharpened the attention given to the value of his life. Yes, perhaps the effect of his activity, if he had continued it to a more advanced age, would not have been so great as it now necessarily became, when he, like many extraordinary men, was distinguished by fate through a strange and calamitous end. But while I now was infinitely lamenting the death of Winckelmann, I did not think that I should soon find myself in the condition of being anxious about my own life, for amid all these events my bodily condition had not taken the most favourable turn. I had already brought from home a certain touch of hypochondria which, in this new sedentary and lounging life, was rather strengthened than diminished. The pain in my breast which I had felt from time to time since the accident at Auerstädt, and which after a fall with my horse had notably increased, made me dejected. By an unfortunate diet I destroyed the powers of my digestion, the heavy Merseburg beer clouded my brain, the coffee, which gave me quite a peculiarly melancholy mood, especially when taken with milk after dinner, paralysed my bowels and seemed quite to inhibit their functions, so I experienced great uneasiness without ever being able to embrace the resolution for a more rational life. My nature, supported by the sufficient strength of youth, wavered between the extremes of unrestrained gaiety and melancholy discomfort. Beside this, the epoch of the cold bath had been introduced, which was unconditionally recommended. One was to sleep on a hard bed, only lightly covered, by which all the usual evaporation was suppressed. These and other follies, the consequence of some misunderstood suggestion of Rousseau, would, as was promised, lead us nearer to Nature and deliver us from the corruption of morals. All the above applied, without discrimination and with unreasonable alternation, many felt most injuriously, and I irritated my

excellent organism to such an extent that the particular systems contained within it had at last to break out into a conspiracy and revolution in order to save the whole.

One night I awoke with a violent hæmorrhage, and had just enough strength and presence of mind to wake my neighbour in the next room. Dr Reichel was called in, who assisted me in the most friendly manner, and so I wavered for many days between life and death, and even the joy of a subsequent improvement was embittered by the fact that during that eruption a swelling had at the same time formed on the left side of the neck, which, now that the danger was past, they first found time to notice. Recovery is, however, always pleasant and agreeable, though it takes place slowly and painfully, and since with me Nature had helped herself, I seemed to have become another man, for I had gained greater cheerfulness of spirit than I had known for a long time. I was glad to find my inner self free, though externally a wearisome affliction threatened me. But what particularly set me up at this time was to see how many eminent men had undeservedly given me their affection. Undeservedly, I say, for there was not one among them to whom I had not been troublesome through contradictory moods, not one whom I had not more than once hurt by a morbid spirit of contradiction, nay, whom I had not stubbornly avoided for a long time from a feeling of my own wrong doing. This was all forgotten; they treated me in the most affectionate manner and sought partly in my room, partly when I was able to leave it, to amuse and divert me. They drove out with me, entertained me at their country houses, and I seemed soon to recover.

Among these friends I mention first of all Dr Hermann, at that time councillor, afterwards burgomaster of Leipsic. He was among those boarders whom I got to know through Schlosser, the one with whom an always equable and lasting connection was maintained. He might well be reckoned among the most diligent of his academic fellow-citizens. He attended his lectures with the greatest regularity, and his private industry remained ever the same. Step by step, without the least deviation, I saw him attain his doctor's degree, then raise himself to the assessorship, without anything of this seeming arduous to him, or that he was in the



least hurried or had been too late about anything. The gentleness of his character attracted me, his instructive conversation held me fast ; indeed, I think really that I took pleasure in his methodical industry, especially on this account, because I thought that by acknowledgment and high esteem I might appropriate to myself a merit of which I could in no way boast. He was just as regular in the exercise of his talents and in the enjoyment of his pleasures as in his business. He played the piano with great finish, drew with feeling from Nature, and stimulated me to do the same ; when, in his manner, on grey paper with black and white chalk, I used to copy many a willow plot on the Pleisse, and many a lovely nook of those still waters, and at the same time longingly indulge in my fancies. He knew how to reply to my sometimes comical disposition with merry jests, and I remember many a pleasant hour which we spent together, when he invited me with a jesting solemnity to a *tête-à-tête* supper, where, with some ceremony, by the light of waxen candles, we ate what is called a councillor's hare, which had run into his kitchen as a perquisite of his position, and with many jokes after the manner of Behrisch, loved to season the meat and heighten the spirit of the wine. That this excellent man, who is still working in his distinguished office, rendered me most loyal assistance during my illness, of which there had been a foreboding, but which had not been foreseen in its full extent, that he bestowed every leisure hour upon me, and by remembrance of former happy times managed to brighten the gloomy moment, I still acknowledge with sincerest thanks and am glad that after so long a time I can give them publicity. Besides this worthy friend Gröning of Bremen particularly interested himself in me. I had made his acquaintance only a short time before, and I first became aware of his good feeling towards me during my misfortune. I felt the value of his favour all the more keenly, as no one readily seeks a closer connection with an invalid. He spared nothing to give me pleasure, he drew me away from reflecting on my condition, to hold up to me and to promise me recovery and a wholesome activity in the nearest future. How often have I been pleased, as life went on, to hear how this excellent man has in the weightiest affairs shown himself useful, and a blessing to his native city.

Here, too, it was that friend Horn uninterruptedly brought into action his love and attention. The whole Breitkopf household, the Stock family, and many others, treated me as a near relation ; and so through the goodwill of so many friendly persons the feeling of my situation was soothed in the tenderest way.

I must here, however, make more particular mention of a man whom I first came to know at this time, and whose instructive intercourse so blinded me to the miserable state in which I was in that I actually forgot it. This was Langer, afterwards librarian at Wolfenbüttel. Eminently learned and instructed, he was delighted at my voracious hunger after knowledge, which now, with the irritability of sickness, broke out into a perfect fever. He sought to calm me by a clear view of things, and I am much indebted to my intercourse with him, short though it was, for he understood how to guide me in various ways, and made me attentive whither I had to direct myself at the present moment. I felt myself the more indebted to this important man, as my intercourse with him exposed him to some danger ; for when he received the post of tutor to the young Count Lindenau after Behrisch, the father made it an express condition that the new Mentor was to have no intercourse with me. Curious to make the acquaintance of such a dangerous subject, he contrived to see me several times on neutral ground. I soon won his affection, and he, wiser than Behrisch, called for me by night. We went for a walk together, conversed about interesting things, and, finally, I accompanied him to the door of his sweetheart, for even this apparently austere, serious, scientific man had not remained free from the toils of a very amiable lady.

German literature, and with it my own poetical undertakings, had for some time become strange to me, and, as usually is the result of such an auto-didactic circular course, I turned again to the beloved ancients, who still constantly, like distant blue mountains, clear in their outlines and masses, but indiscernible in their parts and internal relations, bounded the horizon of my intellectual wishes. I made an exchange with Langer, in which I at the same time played the part of Glaucus and Diomedes ;<sup>1</sup> I left over to him

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<sup>1</sup> " *Iliad*," Book VI., 232-36.

whole baskets of German poets and critics, and received in return a number of Greek authors, the study of which was to refresh me even during the most tedious convalescence. The confidence which new friends accord to one another usually develops by degrees. Common occupations and hobbies are the first things in which a mutual harmony shows itself; then communication is wont to extend itself over past and present passions, especially over love affairs; but there is still something deeper which opens itself, if the intimacy is to be perfected, namely, the religious sentiments, the affairs of the heart which relate to the imperishable, and which both establish the foundation and adorn the summit of a friendship.

The Christian religion was wavering between its own historically positive basis and a pure deism, which, grounded on morality, was in its turn to lay the foundation of ethics. The diversity of characters and modes of thought here showed itself in infinite gradations, especially when still a leading difference was brought into play as the question arose how great a share the reason and how great a share the feelings could and should take in such convictions. The most lively and most intellectual men showed themselves in this matter like butterflies, who, quite regardless of their caterpillar state, throw away the cocoon in which they have grown up to their organic perfection. Others, more sincerely and moderately minded, one might compare to flowers, which, although they unfold themselves to the most beautiful bloom, yet do not tear themselves from the root, from the maternal stem; nay, rather through this family connection first bring the desired fruit to maturity. Of this latter kind was Langer, for though a learned man, and with great knowledge of books, he would yet give the Bible a specially fine eminence over other writings which have come down to us, and regard it as a document from which alone we could prove our moral and spiritual pedigree. He belonged to those who could not conceive of an immediate connection with the great God of the Universe; a mediation was therefore necessary for him, an analogy to which he thought he could find everywhere in earthly and heavenly things. His discourse, which was pleasing and consistent, easily found a hearing with a young man who, separated from worldly things by an annoying illness, found it highly

desirable to direct the activity of his mind to the heavenly. Grounded as I was in the Bible, it was only a question of declaring that as divine which I had hitherto valued in human fashion, and this was the easier for me as I had made my first acquaintance with that book as a divine one. To a sufferer, to one feeling himself delicate, nay, weak, the Gospel was therefore welcome; and even though Langer, with all his faith, was at the same time a very sensible man, and firmly maintained that one should not let the feelings prevail, and should not be led astray into wild imaginings, I could not have managed to occupy myself with the New Testament without feeling and enthusiasm. In such conversation we passed a good deal of time, and he grew so fond of me as a sincere and well-prepared proselyte that he did not scruple to sacrifice to me many of the hours destined for his fair one, and he even ran the risk of being betrayed and, like Behrisch, looked askance upon by his patron. I returned his affection in the most grateful manner, and if what he did for me would have been of value at any time, I could not, in my present condition, but regard it as worthy of the highest honour.

But, as when the concert of our souls is most spiritually attuned, the rude, shrieking tones of the world usually burst in most violently and boisterously, and the contrast which has gone on exercising a secret control, coming forward all at once, affects us the more sensibly; so I was not to be dismissed from the peripatetic school of my Langer without having experienced an event which at least for Leipsic was strange, namely, a riot, which was stirred up by the students and, indeed, for the following cause. Some young people had quarrelled with the soldiers of the city, and the affair had not gone off without violence. Many of the students banded themselves together to revenge the injuries inflicted. The soldiers resisted stubbornly, and the advantage was not on the side of the very discontented and academic citizens. It was now said that persons of position had praised and rewarded the conquerors for their valiant resistance, and by this the youthful feeling of honour and revenge was mightily provoked. It was publicly said that on the next evening windows would be broken in, and some friends who brought me the news that this was actually taking place were obliged to bring me off there, since youth and the

multitude are always attracted by danger and tumult. There really began a strange spectacle. The otherwise open street was lined on one side with men who, quite quietly, without noise or movement, waited to see what would happen. About a dozen young fellows were walking up and down the empty street in apparently the greatest composure, but as soon as they came opposite the marked house they threw stones at the windows as they passed by, and this repeatedly as they turned backwards and forwards so long as the panes would rattle. Just as quietly as this was done all at last dispersed, and the affair had no further consequences.

With so ringing an echo of university exploits, I departed in September 1768 from Leipsic in the comfortable carriage of a hackney coachman and in the company of some trustworthy persons of my acquaintance. In the neighbourhood of Auerstädt I thought of that previous accident, but I could not forbode that which many years afterwards would threaten me with greater danger ;<sup>1</sup> just as little as in Gotha, where we had the castle shown to us, could I think in the great hall adorned with stucco figures that on that very spot so much favour and affection would befall me.<sup>2</sup> The nearer I approached to my native city the more I recalled to myself doubtfully the circumstances, prospects, and hopes with which I left home, and it was with a very disheartening feeling that I now returned, as it were, like one shipwrecked. Since, however, I had not much with which to reproach myself, I managed to compose myself fairly well ; meanwhile the welcome was not without emotion. The great vivacity of my nature, excited and heightened by illness, caused an impassioned scene. I might have looked worse than I myself knew, for I had not consulted a looking-glass for a long time, and who does not become used to himself ? Enough, they silently agreed to communicate many things to me by degrees, and above all to let me have some repose, both bodily and mental.

My sister at once associated herself with me, and as previously from her letters, so I knew more accurately, and in detail could understand, the conditions and position of

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<sup>1</sup> The battle at Auerstädt in 1806.

<sup>2</sup> Probably refers to the celebration of his birthday by Prince August at the Court of Gotha in 1801. •

the family. After my departure my father had applied all his didactic taste to my sister, and in a house completely shut up, rendered secure by peace, and even cleared of lodgers, had cut her off from almost every means of in any degree looking about out of doors and refreshing herself. French, Italian, English, she must pursue and work at in turns, besides this he compelled her to practise a great part of the day on the piano. Writing also could not be neglected, and I had before noticed that he directed her correspondence with me, and had let his teaching come to me through her pen. My sister was, and remained, an indefinable creature, the most peculiar mixture of strength and weakness, of stubbornness and pliability, which qualities operated, now united, now isolated, by will and inclination. Thus she had in a manner, which seemed to me fearful, turned her hardness against my father, whom she did not forgive for having hindered or embittered for her so many innocent joys these three years, and of his good and excellent qualities she would not acknowledge even one. She did everything that he commanded and arranged, but in the most unamiable manner in the world. She did it in the traditional routine, neither more nor less. From love or a desire to please, she accommodated herself to nothing, so that this was one of the first things about which my mother complained in a private conversation with me. But since my sister required love as much as any human being, she turned her affection wholly to me. Her care in nursing and entertaining me absorbed all her time ; her female companions, who were dominated by her without her intending it, had also to think out all sorts of things in order to be pleasing and consolatory to me. She was inventive in cheering me up, and even developed some grains of comical humour which I had never known in her, and which became her very well. There arose between us a coterie-language, by which we could converse before all people without their understanding us, and she often used this slang with great pertness in the presence of our parents.

My father was personally in tolerable comfort. He was in good health, spent a great part of the day in the instruction of my sister, wrote at the description of his travels, and was longer in tuning his lute than in playing on it. At the same time he concealed, as well as he could, his vexation

at finding, instead of a vigorous, active son who ought now to take his degree and run through the prescribed course of life, an invalid who seemed to suffer still more in soul than in body. He did not conceal his wish that they would be expeditious with my cure, but one had, especially in his presence, to be on one's guard against hypochondriacal expressions, because he could then become violent and bitter.

My mother, by nature very lively and cheerful, spent under these circumstances very tedious days. Her little housekeeping was soon provided for. The mind of the good lady, which was never unoccupied internally, wished to find some interest, and that which was nearest at hand was religion, and that she embraced the more fondly as her best female friends were cultivated and zealous worshippers of God. Among them, at their head, stood Fräulein von Klettenberg. She is the same from whose conversation and letters arose "The Confessions of a Fair Saint," which are found inserted in "Wilhelm Meister." She was delicately built, of medium size; an affectionate, natural demeanour had been made still more pleasant by the manner of the world and the court. Her very neat attire reminded one of the dress of Herrenhut ladies. Cheerfulness and peace of mind never deserted her. She looked upon her sickness as a necessary element of her transient earthly existence; she suffered with the greatest patience, and in the intervals when free from pain she was lively and talkative. Her favourite, indeed, perhaps her only, conversation was on the moral experiences which a man who observes himself may form on himself, to which were added the religious views, which in a very graceful manner, nay, with genius, came under her consideration as natural and supernatural. It scarcely needs more to recall to memory to the friends of such descriptions, that detailed delineation composed in the depth of her soul. Owing to the peculiar course which she had taken from her youth, the distinguished rank in which she had been born and educated, and the liveliness and originality of her mind, she did not agree very well with the other ladies who had set out on the same way to salvation. Frau Griesbach, the chief of them, seemed too severe, too dry, too learned; she knew, thought, and comprehended more than the others, who contented themselves

with the development of their feelings, and she was therefore burdensome to them, because every one neither could nor would carry with them so great an apparatus on the way to salvation. Therefore most of them were somewhat monotonous, since they confined themselves to a certain terminology which one might well have compared with that of the later sentimentalists. Frau von Klettenberg held her way between both extremes, and seemed, with some self-complacency, to mirror herself in the image of Count Zinzendorf,<sup>1</sup> whose feelings and actions bore witness to a higher birth and more distinguished rank. Now in me she found what she wanted, a young, lively creature striving after an unknown happiness, who though he could not regard himself as exceptionally sinful, yet did not find himself in a comfortable condition, and was not quite healthy in body or soul. She was delighted with what Nature had given me, as well as with much that I had acquired for myself; and if she conceded to me many advantages, she was by no means humiliated by this, for, in the first place, she never thought of rivalling a member of the male sex, and, secondly, with regard to religious culture, she believed she was very much in advance of me. My restlessness, my impatience, my striving, my seeking, investigating, meditating, and wavering, she interpreted in her own way and did not conceal from me her conviction, but assured me in plain terms that all this came from my having no reconciled God. Now I had always believed from my youth up that I stood on very good terms with my God, nay, I even imagined from various experiences that He might even be in arrears with regard to me, and I was bold enough to believe that I had something to forgive Him. This self-conceit was based upon my infinite goodwill, to which, as it seemed to me, He should have given better assistance. It may be imagined how my female friend and I fell into disputes over this subject, which, however, always terminated in the friendliest way, and often, like my conversation with the old rector, with the remark that I was a foolish fellow to whom many allowances must be made.

As I was very troubled by the swelling on my neck, while the physician and surgeon first wished to disperse this

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<sup>1</sup> 1700-60. The founder of the Moravian Brotherhood.



excrescence, afterwards, as they said, they wished to bring it to a head, and at last found it advisable to open it ; so for a considerable time I had to suffer more from inconvenience than from pain, though towards the end of the cure the continual touching with lunar caustic and other corrosive substances gave me very disagreeable prospects for each successive day.

The physician and surgeon both belonged to the Pious Separatists, though both were of highly different dispositions, the surgeon a slender, well-built man, with a light and skilful hand, was unfortunately somewhat restless, but endured his condition with truly Christian patience, and did not suffer his malady to confuse him in his profession. The physician, an inexplicable, sly-looking, friendly speaking, and, moreover, an enigmatic man, who in the pious circle had earned for himself quite a peculiar confidence, active and attentive, he was consoling to the sick, but more than by all this he extended his practice by the gift of showing in the background some mysterious medicines prepared by himself, of which no one could speak, because with us the physicians were strictly forbidden to make up their own prescriptions. With certain powders, which may have been some kind of digestive, he was not so reserved, but of that powerful salt, which was only to be applied in the greatest dangers, there was only mention among believers, though no one had yet seen it or traced its effects. To excite and strengthen our belief in the possibility of such a universal remedy, the physician had recommended to his patients, where he found any susceptibility, certain mystic, chemical, or alchemical books, and gave them to understand that by one's own study of them one could acquire that treasure for oneself, which was all the more necessary as the preparation of it could not well be communicated as well for physical as especially for moral reasons ; nay, that in order to comprehend, produce, and use this great work, one must know the secrets of Nature in their connection, since it was not a particular but a universal remedy and could indeed be produced under different forms and shapes. My friend had listened to these enticing words. The health of the body was too nearly related to the health of the soul, and could a greater benefit, a greater mercy, be exercised towards others than by appropriating to oneself a remedy

by which so much suffering could be assuaged, so many a danger averted. She had already secretly studied Welling's "Opus Major Cabalisticum," for which, however, as the author immediately darkens and removes the light he imparts, she was looking about for a friend who, in this alternation of light and gloom, might keep her company. It needed only a small incitement to inoculate me also with this disease. I procured the work, which, like all writings of this kind, could trace its pedigree in a direct line up to the Neo-Platonic School. My most important labour in this book was most accurately to notice the dark hints by which the author refers from one passage to another, and promises to reveal what he conceals, and to mark down on the margin the number of the page where such passages as should explain each other were to be found. But even so the book remained obscure and incomprehensible enough, except that one had studied oneself into a certain terminology and, while one used it according to one's fancy, one believed that one was at least saying, if not understanding, something. The said work makes mention of its predecessors with much praise, and we were therefore stirred up to search out those original sources themselves. We now turned ourselves to the works of Theophrastus Paracelsus,<sup>1</sup> and Basil Valentine, not less to those of Helmont,<sup>2</sup> Starkey, and others, whose teachings and directions, resting more or less on Nature and imagination, we tried to see into and follow out. The "Aurea Catena Homeri" particularly pleased me, in which Nature, though perhaps in a fantastic fashion, is represented in a beautiful combination, and so sometimes by ourselves, sometimes together, we employed much time on these singularities, and passed the evenings of a long winter very agreeably during my confinement to my room; while we three, for my mother was included, were more delighted with these secrets than we could have been at their revelation.

Meanwhile a very severe trial was preparing for me, for a disturbed, and one might even say, for certain moments, a destroyed, digestion gave rise to such symptoms that in

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<sup>1</sup> 1493-1541. Physician and mystic.

<sup>2</sup> Johann Baptist van Helmont, 1577-1644, physician and chemist, philosopher and mystic. His writings in Latin and Dutch were translated into German in 1683.

great tribulation I thought I should lose my life, and none of the remedies applied would produce any further effect. In this last extremity my distressed mother, with the greatest vehemence, constrained the embarrassed physician to come out with his universal medicine. After long resistance, he hurried home in the dead of night, and returned with a small phial of crystallised, dried salt, which, dissolved in water, was swallowed by the patient, and had a decidedly alkaline taste. The salt was scarcely taken when an alleviation of the condition showed itself, and from that moment the malady took a turn, which by degrees led to improvement. I cannot say how much this story strengthened and increased our faith in our physician and our diligence in making ourselves partakers of such a treasure.

My friend, who, without parents, brothers, or sisters, lived in a large, well-situated house, had already begun before this to purchase a small draught furnace, alembics and retorts of moderate size ; and, in accordance with the hints of Welling and the significant signs of our physician and master, operated principally upon iron, in which the most healing powers were said to be concealed if one knew how to open it ; and because the volatile salt, which must be produced, played a great part in all the writings known to us, so for these operations alkalies were required, which, while they flowed away into the air, were to unite with these super-terrestrial things, and at last produce *per se* a mysterious excellent neutral salt.

Scarcely was I restored to health in some measure and, favoured by the better season, able once more to occupy my old gable room, than I, too, began to provide myself with a little apparatus. A small draught furnace with a sand-bath was prepared, and I very quickly learnt, with a burning slow match, to change the glass alembics into vessels in which the different mixtures were to be evaporated. Now were the strange ingredients of the macrocosm and microcosm handled in an odd, mysterious manner, and before all I tried to produce neutral salts in an unheard-of way. But what occupied me most for a long time was the so-called liquor silicum (flint juice), which arises when one melts down pure quartz with a suitable amount of alkali, whence there results a transparent glass which, on exposure to the air, melts away and exhibits a beautiful clear fluidity.

Whoever has once prepared this himself and seen it with his own eyes, will not blame those who believe in a maiden earth, and in the possibility of producing further effects upon it and by means of it. I had acquired a peculiar dexterity in preparing the liquor silicum, the fine white flints which are found in the Main furnished a perfect material for it, and in the other requisites and in diligence I was not lacking ; but at last I got tired, because I was obliged to notice the flinty substance was in no way so closely combined with the salts as I had philosophically imagined, for it very easily separated itself out again, and the most beautiful mineral fluidity, which sometimes, to my greatest astonishment, had appeared in the form of an animal jelly, always deposited a powder which I was obliged to pronounce the finest flint dust, but which gave no sign of anything productive in its nature, from which one could have hoped to see the maiden earth pass into the maternal state.

Strange and disconnected as these operations were, I yet learned many things from them. I paid accurate attention to all the crystallisations which might occur, and became acquainted with the external forms of many natural things ; and as I well knew that in modern times chemical subjects were treated more methodically, I wished to get a general conception of them, although, as a half-adept, I had very little respect for the apothecaries and all those who operated with common fire. Meanwhile, the chemical "Compendium" of Boerhaave<sup>1</sup> attracted me powerfully, and led me to read several of his writings, in which (since my tedious illness had brought me near to medical subjects) I found an inducement to study also the "Aphorisms" of this excellent man, which I was glad to stamp upon my mind and in my memory.

Another employment, somewhat more human and far more useful for my immediate cultivation, was looking through the letters which I had written home from Leipsic. Nothing gives us a greater revelation of ourselves than when we see before us again that which has proceeded from us years before, so that we can now consider ourselves as an object of contemplation. Only, in truth, I was then too

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<sup>1</sup> The most celebrated physician of his time, 1688-1738, Professor at Leyden.

young, and the epoch represented by those papers was still too near. Above all, as in our younger years we do not easily lay aside a certain self-complacent conceit, so this expresses itself especially in despising what we have been a little time before ; for while, indeed, we were aware from step to step that that which we regard as good and excellent in ourselves and others does not hold good, we think that we can but extricate ourselves from the embarrassment by ourselves throwing away what we cannot preserve. So was it with me. For as in Leipsic I had gradually learnt to set little value on my childish labours, so now my academic course seemed to me likewise of small account, and I did not understand that for this very reason it must have great value for me, because it elevated me to a higher degree of observation and insight. My father had carefully collected my letters to him and to my sister and sewed them together ; nay, he had even corrected them with attention, and improved the mistakes both in spelling and grammar.

What struck me first about these letters was their external aspect. I was appalled at an incredible carelessness of handwriting which extended from October 1765 to the middle of the following January. But in the middle of March there appeared all at once a quite formed, orderly hand, such as I was accustomed to employ formerly at a prize competition. My astonishment over this resolved itself in gratitude towards the good Gellert, who, as I now well remember, when we handed in our essays to him, in his cordial tone of voice, made it a sacred duty for us to practise our handwriting as much, if not more, than our style. This he repeated as often as any scrawled, careless writing came to his sight, on which occasion he often said that he would like to make good handwriting of his pupils the principal end of his instruction ; the more so as he had often enough remarked that a good hand brought a good style after it.

I could also further notice that the French and English passages in my letters, if not free from blunders, were written with facility and freedom. These languages I had likewise continued to practise in my correspondence with George Schlosser, who was still at Treptow, and I had remained with him in constant communication, by which I was instructed in many secular affairs (for things did not always turn out

with him quite as he had hoped), and acquired an ever-increasing confidence in his earnest, noble way of thinking. Another observation which, on looking through those letters, could not escape me, was that my good father, with the best intentions, had done me a special mischief, and had led me into that odd way of life into which I had at last fallen. He had, namely, repeatedly warned me against card-playing, but Frau Hofrath Böhme, as long as she lived, contrived to persuade me after her own fashion by declaring that my father's warning was only against the abuse. Now, as I saw the advantages of it in society, I willingly let myself be directed by her. I had indeed the sense of play, but not the spirit of play ; I learnt all games easily and quickly, but I could never keep up the proper attention for a whole evening. Therefore, when I began very well, I always failed at the end and made myself and others lose, through which I went off, always out of humour, either to the supper table or out of the company. Scarcely had Mme Böhme died, who, moreover, during her long illness had not kept me in practice, than my father's doctrine gained force. I first excused myself from card parties, and while they did not know what else to do with me, so I became even more of a burden to myself than to others, and refused invitations, which then became less frequent and at last ceased altogether. Play, which is much to be recommended to young people, especially those who have a practical sense and wish to look about for themselves in the world, could never, indeed, with me become a passion, for I never got further—I might play as well as I could. If anyone had given me a general view of the subject and let me observe how certain signs and more or less of chance form a kind of material on which judgment and activity can exercise themselves—had anyone made me see several games at once, I might sooner have become reconciled with them. With all this, at the time of which I am speaking, I had come to the conviction, from these considerations, that one should not avoid social games, but should rather strive after a certain dexterity in them. Time is infinitely long, and every day is a vessel into which a great deal may be poured if one actually wishes to fill it up.

Thus variously I was occupied in my solitude ; the more so as the departed spirits of the sundry hobbies to which I had from time to time devoted myself had an

opportunity of reappearing. So I turned again to drawing, and as I always wished to work directly from Nature, or rather from reality, I made a picture of my room and its furniture and the persons who were in it, and when this ceased to amuse me, I represented all kinds of town-tales which were told at the time, and in which interest was taken. —All this was not without character and not without a certain taste, but unfortunately the figures lacked proportion and the proper vigour, besides which the execution was extremely misty. My father, who continued to take pleasure in these things, wished to have them more distinct ; everything, too, must be finished and completed. He therefore had them mounted and surrounded with ruled lines ; nay, the painter Morgenstern, his domestic artist—the same who afterwards made himself known, and indeed famous, by his church views—had to insert perspective lines of the rooms and chambers, which then, indeed, stood in pretty glaring contrast with those cloudily indicated figures. He thought by this means constantly to compel me to greater definition, and in order to please him, I drew various objects of still life, in which, since the originals stood as patterns before me, I could work with greater clearness and precision. At last it occurred to me to etch again.

I had composed a tolerably interesting landscape, and felt myself very fortunate when I could look out the old rules handed on to me by Stock and could, at my work, recall those pleasant times. I soon bit the plate and had a proof taken ; unfortunately the composition was without light and shade, and I now tormented myself to bring in both, but as it was not quite clear to me what was the essential point, I could not get finished. I had been quite well up to this time in my own fashion, but now a disease befell me which had never troubled me before. My throat, namely, had become quite sore, and especially that part which one calls the uvula ; I could not swallow anything without great pain, and the physicians did not know what to make of it. They tormented me with gargles and painting, but could not free me from my misery. At last I became aware, as by an inspiration, that I had not been careful enough in the biting of the plates, and that by often and passionately repeating it I had contracted this disease, and had always renewed and increased it. To the physicians

the cause was plausible, and very soon certain on my giving up my etching and biting, all the more readily as the attempt had by no means turned out well and I had more reason to conceal than exhibit my work, for which I consoled myself the more easily, as I very soon saw myself freed from the troublesome disease. Therefore I could not refrain from the reflection that my similar occupation at Leipsic might have contributed a good deal to those diseases from which I had suffered so much. It is indeed a tedious and also a melancholy business to take too much care of ourselves and of what injures and what benefits us ; but there is no question that with the wonderful idiosyncrasy of human nature on the one side, and the infinite variety of human life and pleasure on the other, it is a wonder that the human race has not worn itself out long ago. Human nature seems to possess a peculiar kind of toughness and many-sidedness, since it overcomes everything which approaches it, or which it takes into itself, and if it cannot assimilate it, at least makes it indifferent. Indeed, in the case of any great excess, it must yield to the elements in spite of all resistance, as the many endemic diseases and the effects of brandy convince us. If we could, without being morbidly anxious, take care of ourselves as to what works favourably and unfavourably upon us in our complicated civil and social life, and would leave off what is actually pleasant to us as an enjoyment for the sake of the evil consequences, we should know easily how to remove many an inconvenience which, with a constitution otherwise sound, often troubles us more than a disease itself. Unfortunately, it is in dietetics as in morals ; we cannot see into a fault till we have got rid of it, by which nothing is gained, because the next fault is not like the one that has gone before, and therefore cannot be recognised under the same form.

On reading through these letters which had been written from Leipsic to my sister, this remark among others could not escape me, that I at once at the very beginning of my academic instruction had regarded myself as very clever and wise, since, as soon as I had learned anything, I put myself in the place of the professor, and so became didactic on the spot. It was amusing enough for me to see how I had immediately applied to my sister whatever Gellert had imparted or advised in his lectures, without seeing that



both in life and in reading a thing may be proper for a young man without being suitable for a lady; and we both together joked over these mimicries. The poems also which I had composed in Leipsic were already too poor, and they appeared to me cold, dry, and, in respect to that which was meant to express the conditions of the human heart or mind, too superficial. This induced me, when I was again to leave my father's house and to go to a second university, to decree a great *auto da fé* over my labours. Several plays which I had begun, some of which had reached the third or fourth act, while others had only the plot completed, together with many other poems, letters, and papers, were given over to the fire, and scarcely was anything spared, except the manuscript by Behrisch "Die Laune des Verliebten" and "Die Mitschuldigen," which last I always went on improving with peculiar affection, and, as the piece was already complete, I again brooded over the plot to make it have more movement and to be more intelligible. Lessing in the first two acts of his "Minna" had set up an unattainable pattern of how a drama should be developed, and there was nothing to which I attached more importance than to enter into his mind and his views.

Already the recital of whatever moved, excited, and occupied me in those days has been recorded in sufficient detail, but I must, nevertheless, again recur to that interest with which super-sensuous things inspired me, of which I once for all, so far as it might be possible, undertook to form some notion. I experienced a great influence from an important book that came into my hands: it was Arnold's "History of the Church and of Heretics."<sup>1</sup> This man is not a merely reflective historian, but at the same time pious and sensitive. His sentiments agreed very well with mine, and what particularly pleased me in his work was that I obtained a more favourable idea of many heretics, who had hitherto been represented to me as either mad or godless. The spirit of contradiction and the love of paradoxes stick fast in us all. I diligently studied the different opinions, and as I had often enough heard it said that in the end every man has his own religion, nothing seemed to me more natural than that I should form mine, too, and this I did,

with much satisfaction. The basis of it was Neo-Platonism ; the hermetical, mystical, and cabalistic also made their contribution, and thus I built for myself a world which looked strange enough. I could well represent to myself a Godhead which has gone on producing itself from eternity, but as one cannot think of production without multiplicity, so it must necessarily have appeared to itself as a second, which we recognise under the name of Son ; now these two must continue the act of producing, and again appear to themselves in the Third, which was just as substantial, living, and eternal as the whole. With these, however, the circle of the Godhead was closed, and it would not have been possible for them to bring forth another perfectly equal to them. Since, however, the impulse to production always went on, they created a Fourth, but which fostered in itself a contradiction inasmuch as it was, like them, unlimited, and yet was to be contained in them and limited by them. Now this was Lucifer, to whom the whole power of creation was committed from this time, and from whom all other beings were to proceed. He displayed at once his infinite activity, as he created the whole body of angels, all again after his own likeness, but contained in him and limited by him. Surrounded by such a glory, he forgot his higher origin, and believed he could find himself in himself, and from this first ingratitude sprang all that does not seem to us to harmonise with the mind and intentions of the Godhead. Now the more he concentrated himself in himself, the more painful must it have become to him, as well as to all the spirits whose sweet uprising to their origin he had embittered, and so that happened which is intimated to us under the form of the fall of the angels ; one part of the same concentrated themselves with Lucifer, the other turned itself again to its origin. From this concentration of the whole creation, for it had proceeded out of Lucifer and had to follow him, sprang now all that we are aware of under the form of matter, which we represent to ourselves as heavy, solid, and dark ; but which, since it is descended, if not even immediately, yet by filiation from the divine being, is just as unlimited, powerful, and eternal as its sire and grandsires. Since now the whole mischief, if we may call it so, merely arose through the one-sided direction of Lucifer, the better half was indeed wanting to

this creation, for it possessed all that is gained by concentration, while it lacked all that can be effected alone by expansion ; and so the whole creation could have destroyed itself by everlasting concentration, could have annihilated itself with its father Lucifer, and lost all its claims to an equal eternity with the Godhead. This condition the Elohim contemplated for a time, and they had the choice to wait for those æons in which the field would have again become clear, and space would be left them for a new creation, as if they wished to seize upon that which existed already and supply the want according to their own eternity. Now they chose the latter, and by their mere will supplied in an instant the whole want which the consequence of Lucifer's undertaking drew after it. They gave to the Eternal Being the faculty of expanding itself, of moving itself towards them ; the peculiar pulse of life was again re-entered, and Lucifer himself could not escape this influence. This was the epoch when that appeared which we know as light, and when that began which we are accustomed to denote by the word creation. Greatly now as this multiplied itself by successive degrees, through the continually working vital power of the Elohim, so there was still wanting a being who might be skilled in restoring the original connection with the Godhead ; and then man was produced, who in all things was to be similar, yea, equal to the Godhead ; but, indeed, found himself once more in the condition of Lucifer, that of being at once unbounded and limited ; and, since this contradiction was to manifest itself in him through all the categories of existence, and a complete consciousness, as well as a decided will, was to accompany his conditions, so it was to be foreseen that he was to be at the same time the most perfect and imperfect, the most happy and unhappy creature. It was not long before he, too, played fully the part of Lucifer. The real ingratitude is separation from the benefactor, and thus that fall was manifest for the second time, although the whole creation is nothing and was nothing but a falling from and returning to the original.

One easily sees how the Redemption is not only decreed from Eternity, but is considered as eternally necessary, nay, that it must ever renew itself through the whole time of becoming and existence. Nothing in this sense is more

natural than that the Godhead himself should take the form of man, which had already prepared itself as a veil, and to share his lot for a short time in order by this assimilation to enhance his joys and alleviate his sorrows. The history of all religions and philosophies teaches us that this great truth, indispensable for man, has been handed down by different nations, in different times, in various ways, even in strange fables and pictures, according to the limitation of knowledge ; enough, if it be only acknowledged that we find ourselves in a condition which, even if it seems to drag us down and oppress us, yet gives us opportunity, nay, makes it a duty, to raise ourselves up and to fulfil the purpose of the Godhead in this manner, that while we are compelled on the one hand to concentrate ourselves, on the other, we do not omit to expand ourselves in regular pulsation.

## BOOK IX

“THE heart, moreover, is often affected to the advantage of different, but especially of social and refined virtues, and the more tender sentiments are excited and developed in it. Many features especially will impress themselves, which give the young reader an insight into the more hidden corner of the human heart and its passions—a knowledge which is worth more than all Greek and Latin, and of which Ovid was a very excellent master. But yet it is not on this account that the classic poets, and therefore Ovid, are placed in the hands of youth. We have from the kind Creator a variety of mental powers to which we must not neglect giving their proper culture in our earliest years, and which cannot be cultivated by logic or metaphysics, Latin or Greek; we have an imagination before which, since it should not seize upon the first conceptions that chance to present themselves, we should place the fittest and most beautiful images, and thus accustom and practise the mind to recognise and love the beautiful everywhere, and in Nature itself, under its definite, true, and also in its finer features. A great many conceptions and general knowledge is necessary to us, as well for the sciences as for daily life, which can be learned out of no compendium. Our feelings, affections, and passions should be advantageously developed and purified.”

This important passage,<sup>1</sup> which is found in the “Universal German Library,” was not the only one of its kind. From many directions similar principles and similar views manifested themselves. They made a very great impression on us lively youths, which worked all the more decidedly as it was strengthened by Wieland’s example, for the works of his second brilliant period showed more clearly that he had formed himself according to such maxims, and what

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<sup>1</sup> Came from Heyne in the discussion of a book about Ovid’s “Metamorphoses.”

could we want more? Philosophy, with its abstruse questions was set aside, the classics, the acquisition of which is accompanied with so much toil, one saw thrust into the background, the compendiums, about the sufficiency of which "Hamlet"<sup>1</sup> had already whispered a doubtful word, came more and more under suspicion. We were directed to the contemplation of an active life, which we willingly led, and to the knowledge of the passions which we partly felt, partly anticipated in our bosoms, and which, if they had been rebuked formerly, now appeared to us as something important and dignified, because they were to be the chief object of our studies, and the knowledge of them was extolled as the most excellent means of cultivating our mental powers. Besides, such a way of thinking was quite in accordance with my own convictions, nay, with my own poetical action and impulse. Therefore, without opposition, after I had frustrated so many good designs and seen so many a fair hope vanish away, I adapted myself to my father's intention of sending me to Strasburg, where I was promised a cheerful, amusing life while I should continue my studies and at last take my degree.

In the spring I felt my health, but still more my youthful spirits, restored, and once more longed to be out of my father's house, for reasons far different from those of the first time; for the pretty rooms and places where I had suffered so much had become disagreeable to me, and with my father himself I could form no pleasant relation. I could not quite forgive him for having manifested more impatience than was reasonable at the relapse of my illness and at my tedious recovery, nay, instead of comforting me by forbearance, frequently expressed himself in a cruel manner about that which lay in no man's hand, as if it depended only on the will. But he, too, was in various ways hurt and offended by me. For young people bring back from universities general ideas, which indeed is quite right and good, but, because they think themselves very wise in them, they apply them as a standard to the objects that meet them, which must thus, for the most part, lose by the comparison. Thus I had gained a general notion of archi-

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<sup>1</sup> "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in your philosophy" ("Hamlet," i. 5).

ture, of the arrangement and decoration of houses, and had applied them imprudently in conversation to our own house. My father had thought out the whole arrangement of it, and had carried through the building with great perseverance, and, in so far as it was a residence exclusively for himself and his family, there was nothing to object to in it, ~~also~~ with this idea very many houses in Frankfort were built. An open staircase went up through the house and opened on large anterooms, which might very well have been separate chambers, as, indeed, we always passed the fine season in them. But the pleasant, cheerful existence for a single family—this communication from above to below—became the greatest inconvenience as soon as several parties occupied the house, as we had but too well experienced on the occasion of the French quartering. For that painful scene with the king's lieutenant would not have happened, nay, my father would have felt all these unpleasantnesses less, if our staircase, after the Leipsic fashion, had run close along the side of the house, and a separate door had been given to each storey. This style of building I once praised highly and set out its advantages, and showed my father the possibility of altering his staircase also, whereupon he fell into an incredible passion, which was all the more violent, as a short time before I had found fault with some scrolled looking-glass frames, and condemned certain Chinese hangings. A scene ensued, which was indeed hushed up and smoothed over, but it hastened my journey to the beautiful Alsace, which I accomplished without delay and in a short time in the newly built, comfortable diligence.

I alighted at the Gasthof zum Geist and hurried at once to satisfy my most earnest desire and to approach the cathedral, which had long been pointed out to me by my fellow-travellers, and had been before my eyes for quite a distance. When I first perceived this Colossus through the narrow lane, and then stood too near before it in the very confined square, it made upon me an impression of a quite peculiar kind, but which I, incapable of analysing it on the spot, carried with me only indistinctly for the time, while I hastily ascended the building so as not to miss the beautiful moment of a high and bright sun, which was to disclose to me at once the broad, rich land. And so from

the platform I saw before me the beautiful region in which for a long time I was to live and reside ; the handsome city, the wide-spreading meadows around it, set and interwoven with splendid thick trees, that striking richness of vegetation which, following the course of the Rhine, marks its banks, islands, and islets. Nor is the level ground stretching down from the south and watered by the Iller less adorned with varied green. Even westward, towards the mountains, there are many low grounds which afford quite as charming a view of wood and meadow-growth, just as the northerly and more hilly part is intersected by innumerable small streams which everywhere favour a rapid growth. Let one imagine between these luxuriant outstretched meads, between these joyously scattered groves, all land adapted for tillage, excellently prepared, verdant, and ripening, and the best and richest spots of the same marked by villages and farmhouses, and such a great and immeasurable plain prepared for man, like a new paradise, far and near bounded by mountains partly cultivated, partly overgrown with woods ; one will conceive the rapture with which I blessed my fate that it had destined for me for some time so beautiful a dwelling-place.

Such a fresh glance into a new land in which we are to abide for a time has still the peculiarity, both pleasant and foreboding, that the whole lies before us like an unwritten tablet. As yet no sorrows and joys which relate themselves to us are recorded on it ; the cheerful, varied, animated plain is for us still mute ; the eye clings only to objects in so far as they are intrinsically important, and neither affection nor passion have especially to render prominent this or that spot ; but a presentiment of what will come already disquiets the young heart, and an unsatisfied craving secretly demands that which is to come and may come, and which, at all events for good or for evil, will imperceptibly assume the character of the neighbourhood in which we find ourselves.

Descended from the height, I tarried some time before the face of the venerable pile, but what I could not quite clearly make out, the first or the following time, was that I regarded this miracle as something monstrous, which must have terrified me, if it had not at the same time appeared to me comprehensible by its regularity and even pleasing



in the finish. Yet I did not in any way busy myself with meditating on the contradiction, but let a monument so astonishing work upon me quietly by its presence. I took a small, but well-situated and pleasant lodging on the south side of the Fish-market, a fine long street, where the ever-continuing movement came to the assistance of every unoccupied moment. I then delivered my letters of introduction, and found among my patrons a merchant who, with his family, was devoted to those pious opinions which were sufficiently well known to me, although, as far as regarded external worship, he had not separated from the church. He was a man of intelligence, and by no means hypocritical in his actions. The company at table, which was recommended to me and I to it, was very pleasant and entertaining. A couple of old spinsters had long kept up the pension with order and good success ; there might have been about ten persons, older and younger. Of these latter, one named Mayer,<sup>1</sup> a native of Lindau, is most present to me. From his form and face he might have been considered the handsomest of men, if, at the same time, he had not had something slovenly in his whole being. In like manner, his splendid natural talents were deformed by an incredible levity, and his excellent temper by an unrestrained dissoluteness. He had an open, joyous face, more round than oval ; the organs of the senses—eyes, nose, mouth, ears—could be called rich ; they showed a decided fullness, without being too large. The mouth was particularly charming, from the curling lips, and his whole physiognomy gave the peculiar expression of a rake, that is, that his eyebrows met over his nose, which in a handsome face always produces a pleasant expression of sensuality. By his joviality, sincerity, and good nature, he made himself beloved by all ; his memory was incredible, attention at the lectures cost him nothing ; he retained everything which he heard, and was intellectual enough to take some interest in everything, and this the more easily as he was studying medicine. All impressions remained lively with him, and his waggery in repeating the lectures and imitating the professors often went so far, that when he had heard three different lectures in the morning, he would, at the

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<sup>1</sup> He was a doctor who lived in London after 1783.

dinner-table, make the professors change places with each other, like paragraphs, and often even more abruptly, which parti-coloured lecture frequently entertained us, but often, too, became troublesome.

The rest were more or less polite, serious people ; a pensioned knight of the order of St Louis was among these, but the majority were students, all really good and well disposed, only they were not allowed to go beyond their usual allowance of wine. That this should not easily happen was the care of our president, Dr Salzmann. Already in the sixties, and unmarried, he had attended the dinner-table for many years, and maintained it in order and respectability. He possessed a handsome property, kept himself in his exterior tidy and neat, he even belonged to those who always go in shoes and stockings, and his hat under his arm. To put on the hat was for him an extraordinary action. He usually carried an umbrella, well remembering that the finest summer days often bring thunder storms and passing showers over the land.

With this man I talked over my project of studying further jurisprudence in Strasburg, so as to take my degree as soon as possible. Since he was accurately informed about everything, I asked him about the lectures, which I was to hear and what he generally thought of the matter. Upon that he replied to me that it was not in Strasburg as in the German universities, where they try to educate jurists in the wide and learned sense of the term. Here, in conformity with the relation to France, all was really directed to the practical and managed in accordance with the opinion of the French, who readily keep to what is known. They tried to impart to every one certain general principles, certain preliminary knowledge ; they compressed as much as possible, and only communicated what was most necessary. He thereupon made me acquainted with a man, for whom as private tutor<sup>1</sup> one entertained great confidence, which he very soon knew how to gain with me also. I began, by way of introduction, to speak with him on subjects of jurisprudence, and he was not a little surprised at my swaggering ; for I had during my stay in Leipsic gained a greater insight

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<sup>1</sup> The German word *repetent* is one who repeats, in private, with the student the lectures he has previously heard from the professor.

into the requirements of the law than I have hitherto taken occasion to set forth in my narrative, though my whole acquirement could only be reckoned as a general encyclopædic survey and not as proper, definite knowledge. University life, even if during the course of it we cannot boast of our own proper industry, nevertheless supplies endless advantages in every kind of cultivation, because we are always surrounded by men who possess science or are seeking after it, so that we from such an atmosphere, even if unconsciously, are constantly drawing in some nourishment. My private tutor, after he had had patience for some time with my rambling discourse, made me at last understand that before everything I must keep my immediate object in view, which was, to be examined, to take my degree, and then perhaps to begin practice. "In order to stand the first," he said, "the subject is by no means investigated on a broad scale. It is not inquired how and where a law arose, and what gave the inner or outer cause for it; one does not examine how it has been altered by time and custom, still less how it has been reversed by false interpretation or the perverted usage of the courts. In such examinations learned men quite peculiarly pass their lives; but we ignore often that which exists at present, this we stamp firmly on our memory, so that it may always be ready for us when we want to employ it for the use and defence of our clients. Thus we equip our young people for their immediate career, and the rest turns out in proportion to their talent and industry." He then handed to me his pamphlets, which were written in questions and answers, and in which I could at once have passed a pretty good examination, because Hopp's smaller law catechisms stood perfectly in my memory, the rest I supplied with some diligence, and, against my will, qualified myself in the easiest manner as a candidate.

But since in this way all my own activity in the study was cut off—for I had no feeling for anything positive, but wished to have everything explained historically, if not intelligibly—I found for my powers a wider field, which I made use of in the most singular fashion, by giving myself up to an interest which was accidentally brought to me from without.

Most of my fellow-boarders were medical students.

These, as is well known, are the only students who zealously converse about their science and profession even out of the hours of study. This lies in the nature of the case. The objects of their labours are the most obvious to the senses, and at the same time the highest, the simplest, and the most complicated. Medicine employs the whole man, because it is occupied with the whole man. Everything which the young man learns refers directly to an important practice, dangerous indeed, but in many respects bringing a reward. He therefore throws himself passionately into whatever is to be known and done, partly because it is interesting in itself, partly because it opens to him the joyful prospect of independence and wealth. At table, therefore, I heard nothing but medical conversation, as formerly in the pension of Hofrath Ludwig. On walks and in our parties of pleasure nothing else was talked about; for my fellow-boarders, like good fellows, had also become my companions at other times, and they were always joined on all sides by persons of like minds and like studies. The medical faculty in general shone above the others with regard to the fame of the teachers and the number of the students, and so the stream drew me along the more easily, as of all these things I had just so much knowledge that my desire for science could soon be increased and inflamed. At the beginning of the second half-year, therefore, I attended a course of chemistry by Spielmann, one on anatomy by Lobstein,<sup>1</sup> and proposed to be very diligent, because in our society I had already gained some respect and confidence on account of my unusual preliminary or rather extra knowledge.

Yet the dissipation and splitting up of my studies was not enough; they were to be again considerably disturbed, for a remarkable political event set everything in motion and procured for us a proper succession of holidays. Marie Antionette, Archduchess of Austria,<sup>2</sup> Queen of France, was on her way to Paris to pass through Strasburg. The solemnities, by which the people are made to take notice that there is greatness in the world, were busily and abundantly prepared, and especially remarkable to me was

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<sup>1</sup> 1736-84. Professor of Anatomy and Surgery.

<sup>2</sup> At that time not yet fifteen years old.

the building, which stood on an island in the Rhine, between the two bridges, erected for her reception, and for surrendering her into the hands of her husband's ambassador. It was raised only a little above the ground, had in the centre a grand saloon, on each side smaller ones, then followed other chambers, which extended somewhat backwards; suffice it to say, had it been more durably built, it might have done very well as a pleasure house for persons of rank. But that which particularly interested me, and for which I did not grudge many a *biisel*<sup>1</sup> in order to procure from the porter a repeated entrance, was the embroidered tapestries with which the whole interior was lined. Here I saw for the first time a specimen of those tapestries worked after the cartoons of Raphael, and this sight was for me of quite decided influence, as I became acquainted with the true and the perfect on a large scale, though only in copies. I went and came, and came and went, and could not satiate myself with looking; nay, a vain endeavour troubled me, because I would willingly have comprehended that which interested me so extraordinarily. The side chambers I found highly delightful and refreshing, but the chief saloon, the more dreadful. This had been hung with much larger, richer, and more brilliant tapestries, surrounded with crowded ornaments worked after pictures by the modern French.

Now I might have reconciled myself with this style also, because my feelings, like my judgment, did not readily exclude anything entirely, but the subject was excessively revolting to me. These pictures contained the story of Jason, Medea, and Creusa, and therefore an example of the most unhappy marriage. To the left of the throne one saw the bride struggling with the most horrible death, surrounded by persons full of sympathising sorrow; on the right the father was horrified at the murdered children before his feet, whilst the Fury in her dragon car drove along into the air. And so that, to what was cruel and atrocious, there should not also be lacking something absurd, the white tail of that magic bull curled round on the right hand behind the red velvet of the gold-embroidered back of the throne, while the fire-spitting beast himself, and Jason

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<sup>1</sup> A little silver coin current at that time.

who was fighting with him, were completely covered with the sumptuous drapery.

Here all the maxims which I had made my own in Oeser's school were stirring in my bosom. That one had brought Christ and the apostles into the side halls of a nuptial building was, to begin with, without proper selection and judgment, and doubtless the size of the rooms had guided the royal tapestry keeper ; but I willingly forgave that, because it turned out so much to my advantage ; but a blunder like that in the great saloon put me altogether out of my self-possession, and I summoned, with animation and vehemence, my comrades to witness such a crime against taste and feeling. "What !" I cried, without troubling about the bystanders ; "is it permitted to put before the eyes of a young queen so thoughtlessly at her first entrance into her dominions the example of the most horrible marriage that perhaps was ever consummated ! Is there no one among the French architects, decorators, upholsterers, who understands that pictures represent something, that pictures influence the mind and feelings, that they make impressions, that they excite presentiments ! It is just the same as if they had sent the most ghastly spectre to meet this beautiful and, as one hears, pleasure-loving lady at the very frontiers !" I don't know what I said besides ; enough, my companions tried to quiet me and remove me out of the house, that no annoyance might be caused. Then they assured me that it was not every one's business to find significance in pictures, that to themselves nothing of the sort would have occurred, and of such fancies the whole population of Strasburg and the neighbourhood which was to stream in thither would take as little account as the Queen herself and her court.

I still well remember the beautiful and lofty mien, as cheerful as it was imposing, of the youthful lady. She seemed, perfectly visible to us all in her glass carriage, to be jesting with her female attendants in confidential conversation about the multitude that streamed forth to meet her procession. In the evening we wandered through the streets to see the various illuminated buildings, but especially the glowing spire of the cathedral, on which both near and in the distance we could not sufficiently feast our eyes.

The Queen pursued her way, the country people dis-

persed, and the city was soon as quiet as ever. Before the arrival of the Queen, the very sensible arrangement had been made that no deformed persons, no cripple or invalids, who would excite disgust, should show themselves on her route. People joked about this, and I made a little French poem in which I compared the advent of Christ, who seemed to wander in the world specially on account of the sick and the halt, and the advent of the Queen who scared away these unfortunates. My friends let it pass ; but a Frenchman, on the other hand, who lived with us, criticised very mercilessly the language and metre, though, as it seemed, with too much foundation ; I don't remember that I ever again made a French poem afterwards.

Scarcely had the news of the Queen's happy arrival rung from the capital, than the horrible intelligence followed it that, owing to an oversight of the police during the festal fireworks, an indefinite number of men, with horses and carriages, had been destroyed in a street obstructed by building materials, and the city amid these nuptial solemnities had been plunged into mourning and sorrow. They attempted to conceal the extent of the disaster, both from the young royal pair and the world, by burying those who had perished in secret, so that many families were convinced only by the complete absence of their members that they, too, had been swept off by the frightful event. That, on this occasion, those ghastly pictures in the grand saloon came vividly before my mind, I need hardly mention ; for every one knows how powerful certain moral impressions are when they embody themselves, as it were, in those of the senses.

This occurrence, however, was destined, moreover, to place my friends in anxiety and trouble by means of a prank in which I indulged ; among us young people who had been at Leipsic together, there had been ever afterwards maintained a certain itch for hoaxing and in some way mystifying one another. With this wanton love of mischief I wrote to a friend in Frankfort (he was the same who had amplified my poem on the cake-baker Händel, applied it to Medon, and caused its general circulation) a letter, dated from Versailles, in which I informed him of my fortunate arrival there, my participation in the solemnities and other things of the kind, but at the same time enjoined on him

the strictest secrecy ; I must here remark that our little Leipsic society, from the time of that trick which had caused us so much annoyance, had accustomed itself to persecute him from time to time with mystifications, and all the more so as he was the most comic man in the world, and never more amiable than when he discovered the mistake into which he had deliberately been led. Shortly after I had written the letter, I made a little journey and remained absent about a fortnight. Meanwhile the news of that disaster reached Frankfort ; my friend thought I was in Paris, and his affection led him to feel apprehensive lest I were involved in that calamity. He inquired of my parents and others, to whom I was accustomed to write, whether any letters had arrived, and as it was just at the time that that journey prevented me from sending any, they were altogether wanting. He went about in the greatest anxiety, and at last confided the matter to our nearest friends, who were now in the same uneasiness. Fortunately this conjecture did not reach my parents before a letter had arrived which announced my return to Strasburg. My young friends were content to know that I was alive, but remained firmly convinced that I had been in Paris in the interim. The affectionate intelligence of the anxiety which they had felt on my account touched me so much that I foreswore such tricks for ever ; but, unfortunately, I have often since allowed myself to be guilty of something similar. Real life frequently loses its brilliancy to such a degree that one must many a time polish it up again with the varnish of fiction.

This mighty stream of courtly magnificence had now flowed by, and had left behind in me no other longing than after those tapestries of Raphael, which I would have gazed at, revered, nay, adored, every day and every hour. Fortunately, my passionate endeavours succeeded in interesting several persons of consequence in them, so that they were taken down and packed up as late as possible. We now gave ourselves up again to our quiet, easy course of the university and society, and in the latter, the actuary Salzmann, president of our table, continued to be the general pedagogue. His intelligence, complaisance, and dignity, which he always managed to maintain amid all the jests, and often in the little extravagances which he allowed us,



made him beloved and respected by the whole society, and I knew only a few cases where he showed his serious displeasure or interfered with authority in little quarrels and disputes. Yet among them all I was the one who attached myself to him most, and he was not less disposed to converse with me, because he found me more variously cultivated than the others, and not so one-sided in judgment. I also let myself be guided by him in external matters so that he could openly without embarrassment acknowledge me as his companion and comrade ; for though he only occupied a position, which seems to be of little influence, he administered it in a manner which redounded to his highest honour. He was actuary to the Court of Wards (*Pupillen-Collegium*), and there, like the perpetual secretary to a university, he had, properly speaking, the management of things in his hands. Now, as he had conducted the business for many years in the most exact manner, there was no family from the first to the last which did not owe him gratitude, as, indeed, scarcely anyone in the whole administration of government can earn more blessings or curses than one who takes charge of the orphans, or squanders or allows to be squandered their property and goods.

The Strasburgers are passionate walkers, and they have good right to be so. In whatever direction one turns one's steps one finds pleasure grounds, partly natural, partly laid out by art in ancient and modern times, all of them visited and enjoyed by a cheerful, merry, little people. But what made the sight of a number of pedestrians more agreeable here than in other places was the various costume of the fair sex. The middle class of the city girls still retained the plaits of hair twisted up and secured by a large pin, as well as a certain close style of dress, in which any train would have been unbecoming, and the pleasant part of it was their costume did not differ violently according to the rank of the wearer, for there were still some families of rank and distinction who would not allow their daughters to deviate from this costume. The remainder followed the French fashion, and this party made some proselytes every year. Salzmann had many acquaintances, and an entrance everywhere ; a very pleasant circumstance for his companion, especially in summer, for good reception and good company and refreshment were found in all the gardens far and near,

and more than one invitation for this or that pleasant day was received. On one such occasion I found the opportunity of recommending myself very rapidly to a family which I was visiting only for the second time. We were invited, and arrived at the appointed hour. The company was not large ; some played and some walked as usual. Later on, when we were to go to supper, I saw the hostess and her sister talking to one another with animation and as if in a peculiar embarrassment. I went up to them, and said : " Indeed, I have no right, ladies, to force myself into your secrets, but perhaps I am in a position to give you good counsel, or even to serve you." Upon this they disclosed to me their painful position, for they had asked twelve persons to dinner, and at that moment a relation had returned from a journey, who would now, as the thirteenth, be a fatal *memento mori*, if not for himself, yet certainly for some one of the guests. " The matter is very easily remedied," said I ; " permit me to take my leave and make an excuse for me." As they were persons of position and good breeding, they would not allow this, but sent about in the neighbourhood to find a fourteenth. I let it be, yet when I saw the servant coming in at the garden gate, his purpose being unaccomplished, I slipped away, and passed my evening pleasantly under the old lime trees of the Wanzenau. That this self-denial was richly repaid was a very natural consequence.

A certain kind of general sociability is not to be thought of without playing cards. Salzmann renewed the good instructions of Madame Böhme, and I was the more docile, as I had really perceived that by this little sacrifice, if it be one, much pleasure may be procured and even a greater freedom in society than one would otherwise enjoy. The old piquet, which had gone out of fashion, was therefore sought out ; I learnt whist, after the directions of my master. I made myself a card purse, which was to remain untouched under all circumstances, and now I found opportunity to spend most evenings with my friend in the best circles, where, for the most part, they wished me well, and pardoned many a little irregularity to which, nevertheless, my friend, though gently enough, called my attention.

That I might experience symbolically how much one,

even in externals, has to adapt oneself to society and direct oneself according to it, I was compelled to something which seemed to me the most unpleasant thing in the world. I had really very fine hair, but my Strasburg hairdresser assured me at once that it was cut much too short behind, and that it was impossible for him to make a coiffure of it in which I could show myself, because only a few short curled hairs in front were admissible, all the rest from the crown must be tied up in a plait or hair bag. Nothing now was left but to put up with false hair until the natural growth was again restored according to the demands of the time. He promised me that nobody should ever notice the innocent deception (against which at first I protested very earnestly), if I could resolve upon it immediately. He kept his word, and I passed for the young man with the best and best dressed head of hair. But as I had to remain thus trimmed up and powdered from early in the morning, and at the same time to take care not to betray the false ornament by heating myself or violent exercise, this restraint contributed much to my behaving for a time more quietly and politely, and accustomed me to going with my hat under my arm, and consequently in shoes and stockings also; moreover, I did not venture to neglect wearing fine leather understockings to secure myself from the Rhine gnats, which on fine summer evenings were wont to spread themselves over meadows and gardens. If now, under these circumstances, violent bodily exercise was denied me, our social conversations became ever more animated and impassioned; indeed, they were the most interesting in which I had ever yet taken part.

With my own way of feeling and thinking, it cost me nothing to let every one pass for what he was, nay, for that which he wished to pass for, and then the frankness of a fresh youthful heart, which manifested itself almost for the first time in its full bloom made me many friends and adherents. Our company of boarders increased to about twenty persons, and as our Salzmann adhered to his traditional method, everything remained in its old routine, nay, the conversation was almost more decorous, as there were several before whom every one had to be on his guard. Among the newcomers was a man who particularly interested me; his name was Jung, and is the same who afterwards

became known under the name of Stilling.<sup>1</sup> His form, in spite of an antiquated dress, had something delicate about it with a certain sturdiness ; a bag-wig did not disfigure his significant and pleasing countenance. His voice was gentle, without being soft and weak ; indeed it became even melodious and powerful when his zeal was aroused, which very easily occurred. When one came to know him better, one found in him a sound common sense which rested on feeling, and therefore was determined by the affections and passions, and from this very feeling sprang an enthusiasm for what was good, true, and just, in the greatest possible purity. For the course of this man's life had been very simple and yet crowded with events and with manifold activity. The element of his energy was an indestructible faith in God, and in an assistance flowing immediately from Him, which manifestly confirmed itself in an uninterrupted providence, and in an unfailing deliverance from all and every evil. Jung had made so many similar experiences in life, and they had often been repeated of late in Strasburg, so that, with the greatest cheerfulness, he led a life frugal indeed, but yet free from care, and devoted himself earnestly to his studies, although he could not reckon upon any certain subsistence from one quarter to another. In his youth, when on the way to become a charcoal burner, he took up the trade of a tailor, and after he had instructed himself at the same time in higher matters, his knowledge-loving mind drove him to the position of a school master. This attempt failed, and he turned back to his trade, from which, however, he was repeatedly called away, because every one easily felt for him confidence and affection, to take up a post as private tutor. But for his most inward and peculiar culture he had to thank that widespread class of men, who sought out their salvation on their own responsibility, and while they endeavoured to edify themselves by the reading of the Scriptures and of good books, and by mutual exhortation and confession, they thereby attained a degree of cultivation which must excite surprise. For while the interest, which always accompanied them and maintained them in fellowship, rested on the simplest foundation

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<sup>1</sup> 1740-1817. A remarkable, self-taught man. He became a doctor, and later was known as a political economist. He wrote an autobiography and various mystical-pietistic works.

of morality, of well-wishing, and of well-doing, the deviations which could occur with men of such limited circumstances were of little importance, and therefore their conscience remained for the most part pure, and their minds usually cheerful, so there arose no artificial, but certainly a natural culture, which yet had this advantage over others, that it was suitable to all ages and ranks, and by its nature was generally social ; therefore, too, these persons were in their own circle truly eloquent and capable of expressing themselves appropriately and pleasingly on all the tenderest and best concerns of the heart. In this case now was the excellent Jung. Among a few, who, if not like-minded with himself, were such as did not declare themselves averse from his modes of thought, he was found not only talkative, but eloquent ; in particular, he related the history of his life in the most charming manner, and knew how to bring all the circumstances clearly and vividly before his hearers. I pressed him to write them down, and he promised to do so. But because in his way of expressing himself he was like a somnambulist, whom one dare not address lest he should fall from his elevation, or like a gentle stream, to which one dare oppose nothing, in case it should foam, so he was often made to feel uncomfortable in a more numerous society. His faith tolerated no doubt, and his conviction no jest. And if in friendly communication he was inexhaustible, everything came to a standstill with him when he encountered opposition. On such occasions I usually helped him through, for which he rewarded me with sincere affection. Since his way of thinking was not strange to me, but, on the contrary, I had become already accurately acquainted with it in my best friends of both sexes ; also in its naturalness and *naïveté* it harmonised with me, so he found himself on the very best terms with me. The bent of his mind was pleasing to me, and his faith in miracles, which was so useful to him, I left unquestioned. Salzmann, too, behaved towards him with forbearance ; I say with forbearance, for Salzmann, in accordance with his character, natural disposition, age, and circumstances, could not but stand and continue on the side of the rational, or rather the common-sense Christians, whose religion properly rested on the rectitude of their character, and on a manly independence, and who, therefore, did not like to meddle or have

anything to do with feelings which might easily have led them into melancholy and mysticism, and then into obscurantism. This class, too, was respectable and numerous, all people of honour and capacity, understood each other, and were of like persuasion as well as of the same way of life.

Lerse, likewise our fellow-boarder, belonged also to this number ; a perfectly upright young man, and, with limited gifts of fortune, frugal, and precise. His manner of life and housekeeping was the most economical which I ever knew among students. He dressed himself the neatest of us all, and yet he always appeared in the same clothes ; but he managed his wardrobe with the greatest care, kept everything about him clean, and demanded that everything in ordinary life should go after his example. It never happened to him to lean anywhere, or to prop his elbow on the table ; he never forgot to mark his napkin, and it always went ill with the maidservant when the chairs were not perfectly clean. With all this he had nothing stiff in his exterior. He spoke cordially with precise and dry liveliness, in which a light ironical joke was very becoming. In form he was well built, slender, and of moderate height ; his face was marked with smallpox and plain, his small blue eyes cheerful and penetrating. As he had cause to tutor us in many respects, we let him also be our fencing master, for he drew a very fine rapier, and it seemed to amuse him to play off upon us all the pedantry of this profession. We also really profited by him, and had to thank him for many sociable hours which he induced us to spend in good exercise and practice.

By all these peculiarities Lerser fully qualified himself for the position of arbitrator and umpire in all the small and great quarrels which happened, though seldom, in our circle, and which Salzmann in his fatherly way could not appease. Without the external forms, which in universities make so much mischief, we represented a society bound together by circumstances and goodwill, which many others might occasionally touch, but into which they could not intrude. Now, in his judgment of internal annoyances, Lerser always showed the greatest impartiality, and he knew, when the affair could no more be settled by words and explanations, how to conduct the awaited satisfaction in an honourable way to a harmless issue. At this no man was

more skilful than he, though he often used to say, as heaven had destined him for a hero neither in war nor in love, he would be content, both in romance and fighting, with the part of second. Since he remained the same throughout, and might be regarded as a true model of a good steady disposition, the conception of him stamped itself as deeply as affectionately upon me, and when I wrote "Götz von Berlichingen," I felt myself induced to set up a memorial of our friendship, and to give the gallant fellow, who knew how to subordinate himself in so dignified a manner, the name of Franz Lërse.

While now, by his continual humorous dryness, he knew how to remind us of what one owed to oneself and others, and how one ought to adapt oneself in order to live at peace with men as long as possible, and thus set oneself in a certain position towards them, I had to fight both inwardly and outwardly with quite different circumstances and adversaries, because I was at strife with myself and with the objects around me, nay, even with the elements. I found myself in a state of health which furthered me sufficiently in all that I would and should undertake, only there was a certain irritability left behind which did not always let me be in equilibrium. A loud sound was disagreeable to me, diseased objects awakened in me loathing and horror. But I was especially troubled by a giddiness which befell me every time that I looked from a height. All these infirmities I sought to remedy, and, indeed, as I wished to lose no time, in a somewhat violent way. In the evening, when they beat the tattoo, I went close to the multitude of drums, the powerful rolling and beauty of which might have made one's heart burst in one's bosom. I ascended quite alone the highest pinnacle of the cathedral spire, and sat in the so-called neck under the knob or crown, as it is called, for a quarter of an hour, before I ventured to step out again into the open air, where, on standing on a platform, scarcely an ell square, without anything particular to hold on to, one sees before one the boundless land, while the nearest objects and ornaments conceal the church and everything on which and above which one stands. It is exactly as if one saw oneself carried up into the air in a balloon. Such anxiety and pain I repeated so often until the impression became quite indifferent to me, and I have

therefore derived great advantage from these practices in mountain travels and on geological studies, and on great buildings, where I have vied with the carpenters in running over the free-lying beams and the cornices of the building, and even in Rome, where one must run similar risks in order to obtain a nearer view of important works of art. Anatomy also was therefore doubly valuable to me, as it taught me to endure the most repulsive sights, while it satisfied my desire for knowledge. And thus I visited also the clinic of the elder Dr Ehrmann, as well as the lectures of his son on obstetrics, with the twofold object of getting to know all conditions, and freeing myself from all apprehension as to repulsive things. And I have even actually succeeded so far that nothing of this kind could ever put me out of my self-possession. But not only against the impressions of the senses did I seek to steel myself, but also against the assaults of the imagination. The awful and shuddering impressions of the darkness, churchyards, lonely places, churches, and chapels by night, and whatever is connected with them, I managed to render indifferent to me; and in this I went so far that day and night, and every locality, were quite the same to me, so that even when in later times the desire came over me in such surroundings to feel the pleasing shudder of youth, I could scarcely force this again in any degree by the strangest and most alarming images which I called up.

To my efforts to free myself from the pressure and weight of what was all too serious and powerful, which dominated me and appeared to me sometimes as strength, sometimes as weakness, there came to my help that free, social, stirring of life which always attracted me more and more, to which I accustomed myself, and which I at last learnt to enjoy with perfect freedom. It is not difficult to notice in the world that man feels himself most completely and perfectly free from his own failings, when he represents to himself the shortcomings of others and expatiates over them with complaisant censoriousness. It is a fairly pleasant sensation to set ourselves above our equals by disapprobation and misrepresentation, wherefore good society, whether it consists of few or many, is most delighted with it. But nothing equals the comfortable self-complacency when we raise ourselves as judges of our superiors, and of those set over us



—of princes and statesmen—when we find public institutions unfit and unsuitable, only consider the possible and actual obstacles, and recognise neither the greatness of the intention nor the co-operation which is to be expected in every undertaking from time and circumstance.

Whoever remembers the condition of the French kingdom, and knows it accurately and in detail from later writings, will easily represent to himself how at that time people spoke in the Alsatian semi-French about the King and his ministers, the court and court favourites. For my love of instructing myself there were new subjects, and very welcome ones to my pertness and youthful self-conceit. I observed everything accurately, wrote it down industriously, and I now see, from the little that is left behind, that such accounts, though put together at the moment from fables and general unreliable rumours, always have a certain value in after-times, because they serve to keep together and compare the secret made known at last with what was then already discovered and public, and the true and false judgments of contemporaries with the conviction of posterity.

Striking, and daily before the eyes of us street loungers, was the project for beautifying the city, the execution of which, according to drafts and plans, began in the strangest way to pass into reality. Director Gayot had undertaken to reconstruct the angular and uneven lanes of Strasburg, and to lay the foundations of a fine, handsome city regulated by line. Blondel, a Parisian architect,<sup>1</sup> drew a plan by which one hundred and forty householders gained in room, eighty lost, and the rest remained in their former condition. This plan, which was accepted but was not to be put in execution at once, was to approach completion in course of time. Meanwhile, the city oddly enough, wavered between form and formlessness. If, for instance, a crooked side of a street was to be made straight, the first who was anxious to build moved forward to the appointed line, perhaps his next neighbour, perhaps also the third or fourth resident from him, by which the most awkward recesses were left behind, like forecourts, before the houses in the background. They would not use force, yet without compulsion they would

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<sup>1</sup> *Architecte du roi et professeur royal d'architecture*. He wrote a book entitled "L'homme du monde éclairé par les arts."

never get on, consequently no one, when his house was once condemned, ventured to improve or restore anything which related to the street. All these strange accidental inconveniences gave to us rambling idlers the most welcome opportunity of practising our ridicule of making proposals in the manner of Behrisch for accelerating the completion, and of constantly doubting the possibility of it, although many a newly erected handsome building should have brought us to other thoughts. How far that project was favoured by the length of time I cannot say.

Another subject on which the Protestant Strasburgers liked to converse was the expulsion of the Jesuits. These fathers, as soon as the city had fallen to the share of the French, had made their appearance and sought a *domicilium*. But they soon extended themselves and built a magnificent college, which bordered on the cathedral, so that the back of the church covered a third part of its front. It was to be a complete quadrangle and have a garden in the middle ; three sides of it were finished. It is of stone, and solid, like all buildings of these fathers. That the Protestants were pressed hard by them, if not oppressed, lay in the plan of the society, which made it its duty to restore the old religion in its whole compass. Their fall therefore awakened the greatest satisfaction in the opposite party, and one saw, not without pleasure, how they sold their wines, carried away their books, and the building was assigned to another, perhaps less active order. How glad are men when they get rid of an adversary or only of a guardian ; and the herd does not reflect that there, where there is no dog, it is exposed to wolves.

Since, then, every city must have its tragedy at which children and children's children shudder, so in Strasburg frequent mention was made of the unfortunate Prætor Klingling, who, after he had ascended the highest step of earthly happiness, ruled city and country with almost absolute power and enjoyed all that rank, wealth, and influence could afford, at last lost the favour of the court, and was dragged up to answer for all in which he had been indulged hitherto ; nay, was even thrown into prison, where, over seventy years of age, he died a death which gave rise to suspicion.

These and other tales that knight of St Louis, our fellow-

boarder, knew how to relate with passion and animation, for which reason I often accompanied him on his walks, unlike the others, who avoided such invitations, and left me alone with him. As with new acquaintances, I generally let myself go on for a long time without thinking much about them, nor of the effect which they were exercising upon me, so I only noticed by degrees that his stories and opinions rather disgusted and confused, than instructed and enlightened me. I never knew where I was with him, though the riddle might easily have been solved. He belonged to the many to whom life offers no results, and therefore they exert themselves from first to last on individual objects. Unfortunately, with this he had a decided desire, even a passion, for meditating, without any skill in thinking ; and in such men a particular notion easily roots itself firmly, which one may look upon as a mental disease. To such a fixed idea he always came back again, and therefore in the long run was extremely tiresome. He was wont, for instance, to complain bitterly about the decline of his memory, especially for recent events, and asserted with a logic of his own that all virtue springs from a good memory, and, on the contrary, all vice from forgetfulness. This doctrine he managed to carry through with much acuteness, as indeed everything can be maintained, when one permits oneself to use and apply words quite indefinitely in a wider or narrower sense, now closer, now more remote.

At first it amused us to hear him ; nay, his power of persuasion astonished us. We thought we were standing before a rhetorical sophist, who for jest and practice knew how to give a fair appearance to the strangest things. Unfortunately, this first impression blunted itself but too soon, for at the end of every discourse the man came back again to the same theme, however I conducted myself. He was not to be kept fast to older events, although they interested him, though he had them present in his mind with the minutest circumstances. Much rather was he often, by a small circumstance, snatched out of the middle of an historical narrative of world-wide interest, and thrust into his detestable favourite thought.

One of our afternoon walks was particularly unfortunate in this respect, the story of it may stand here instead of similar cases, which might weary, if not vex the reader.

On the way through the town we were met by an aged female beggar, who, by begging and importunity, disturbed him in his story. "Pack yourself off, old witch," said he, and went on. She shouted after him the well-known proverb, only somewhat changed, since she saw well that the unfriendly man was himself old: "If you did not wish to be old, you should have hanged yourself in your youth." He turned round violently, and I was afraid of a scene. "Hanged!" cried he, "have myself hanged! No, that could not have been; I was too honest a fellow for that; but hang myself—hang up my own self—that is true—that I should have done; I should have turned a charge of powder against myself that I might not live to see that I am of no more value." The woman stood as if petrified, but he continued: "You have spoken a great truth, witch mother, and as they have not yet drowned or burned you, you should be rewarded for your proverb." He handed her a büsel, a coin which it was not usual to give a beggar.

We had crossed over the first Rhine bridge and were going to the inn where we intended to stop, and I tried to lead him back to our previous conversation, when, unexpectedly, on the pleasant footpath, a very pretty girl met us, remained standing in front of us, and cried out: "Hallo, Captain, where are you going?" and whatever else is usually said on such an occasion. "Mademoiselle," replied he, somewhat embarrassed, "I do not know——" "How," said she, with graceful astonishment, "do you so soon forget your friends?" The word "forget" nettled him; he shook his head, and replied sullenly enough: "Truly, mademoiselle, I did not know——" Now she retorted with some humour, yet very temperately: "Take care, Captain, another time I may mistake you!" And so she hurried past us, taking long strides, without looking round. At once my companion struck his forehead vehemently with his fists. "O what an ass," he exclaimed, "an old ass I am! Now see whether I am right or not." And now he went on in a very violent manner, with his usual sayings and opinions, in which this case still more confirmed him. I cannot and would not repeat what a philippic he held against himself. At last he turned to me and said: "I call you to witness! Do you remember that shop-woman at the corner who is neither young nor pretty?"

Every time we pass I salute her, and often exchange a couple of friendly words with her, and yet it is thirty years ago that she was friendly to me. But now, I swear it is not more than four weeks since this young lady showed herself more pleasing than was reasonable, and now I will not know her, and insult her for her kindness. Do not I always say that ingratitude is the greatest of vices, and no one would be ungrateful if he were not forgetful ? ”

We entered the inn, and only the carousing, swarming crowd in the apartments stopped the invective which he launched against himself and his contemporaries. He was silent, and I hoped he was pacified, when we stepped into an upper chamber, where we found a young man walking up and down whom the Captain greeted by name. It was pleasant to me to make his acquaintance, for the old fellow had said much good of him to me, and told me that this young man, employed in the war bureau, had often disinterestedly done him very good services when the pensions stopped. I was glad that the conversation took a general turn, and we drank a bottle of wine while we were carrying it on. But here, unfortunately, another failing developed itself which my knight had in common with obstinate men. For as, on the whole, he could not get rid of that fixed notion, so did he stick fast to a disagreeable impression of the moment, and suffer his feelings to run on without moderation. His last vexation about himself had not yet died away, and now was added something new, though of quite a different kind. He had not long cast his eyes here and there before he noticed on the table a double portion of coffee and two cups, and might besides, as he was a fast fellow, have traced some other indication that the young man had not been so solitary all the time. And scarcely had the conjecture arisen in his mind and become a probability that the pretty girl had paid a visit here, than the most extraordinary jealousy was added to that first vexation so as to perplex him completely.

Now before I could suspect anything, for I had hitherto been conversing quite harmlessly with the young man, the Captain began with an unpleasant tone, which I well knew in him, to be sarcastic about the pair of cups and about this and that. The young man, surprised, tried to turn it off pleasantly and sensibly, as is the custom among

men of good breeding ; but the old fellow continued to be unmercifully rude, so that nothing was left for the other but to seize his hat and stick, and at his departure to leave behind a pretty unequivocal challenge. The fury of the Captain now burst out the more vehemently, as in the meantime, almost quite alone, he had drunk another bottle of wine. He struck the table with his fist, and shouted out more than once : " I strike him dead." It was not, however, meant quite so badly, for he often used the phrase when anyone opposed him or otherwise displeased him. Just as unexpectedly, the affair grew worse on the return journey ; for I had the imprudence to represent to him his ingratitude towards the young man and to remind him how strongly he had praised to me the polite obligingness of this official. No ! such rage of a man against himself never came before me again, it was the most passionate conclusion to those beginnings to which the pretty girl had given occasion. Here I saw sorrow and repentance carried into caricature, as all passion supplies the place of genius, and is indeed genius. For he took up again all the incidents of our afternoon ramble, employed them rhetorically for his own self-reproach, brought the witch up at last against himself once more, and confused himself to such an extent that I was afraid he would throw himself into the Rhine. Could I have been sure of fishing him out again speedily, like Mentor his Telemachus, he might have jumped, and I should have brought him home cooled down for this once.

I immediately confided the affair to Lerse, and we went the next morning to the young man, whom my friend in his dry way set laughing. We agreed to bring about an accidental meeting, at which a reconciliation should take place of itself. The most amusing thing about it was the Captain this time, too, had slept off his rudeness, and found himself ready to apologise to the young man, who was not disposed to make any quarrel. All was arranged in one morning, and as the affair was not left quite secret, I did not escape the jokes of my friends who might have foretold to me from their own experience, how troublesome the friendship of the Captain could become upon occasions.

But now, while I am thinking what next to communicate, by a strange play of memory there comes again into my thoughts that venerable cathedral building, to which in

those days I devoted a special attention, and which, in general, constantly presents itself to the eye both in the city and in the country.

The more I considered the façade of the same, the more was that first impression strengthened and developed that here the sublime has entered into alliance with the pleasing. If the vast, when it comes before us as a mass, is not to terrify, if it is not to confuse when we try to investigate its details, it must enter into an unnatural, apparently impossible connection, it must associate to itself the pleasing. But, since now, it will only be possible for us to speak of the impression of the cathedral, if we think of those two irreconcilable qualities as united, so we already see from this in what high value we must hold this ancient monument, and begin in earnest a description of how such contradictory elements could peaceably interpenetrate and unite themselves.

First of all, we devote our considerations, without thinking of the towers, to the façade alone, which powerfully strikes our eyes as an upright oblong parallelogram. If we approach it in twilight, in the moonshine on a starlight night, where the parts become more or less indistinct and finally disappear, we see only a colossal wall, of which the height bears a harmonious proportion to the breadth. If we look on it by day, and by the power of the mind abstract from the details, we recognise the front of a building which not only encloses the space within, but also covers much that lies in the vicinity. The openings of these enormous surfaces point to internal necessities, and according to these we can at once divide it into nine compartments. The great middle door which opens into the nave of the church first meets the eye. On both sides of it lie two smaller ones, belonging to the cross aisles. Over the chief door our glance falls upon the wheel-shaped window, which is to spread an awe-inspiring light into the church and its vaulted arches. At the sides appear two great perpendicular, oblong openings which form a considerable contrast with the middle one and indicate that they belong to the base of the rising towers. In the third storey there are three openings in a row which are designed for belfries and other church requirements. Above them one sees the whole horizontally closed by the balustrade of the gallery

instead of a cornice. Those nine spaces described are supported, enclosed, and separated into three great perpendicular divisions by four pillars rising up from the ground.

Now, as one cannot deny to the whole mass a fine proportion of height to breadth, so also in details it maintains a somewhat uniform lightness by means of these pillars and the narrow compartments between them.

But if we keep to our abstraction, and imagine this enormous wall without ornament, with firm buttresses, with the necessary openings in the same, but only in so far as necessity requires them, we must also confess that there is good proportion for these chief divisions, thus the whole will appear solemn and noble indeed, but always ponderously unpleasant and, being without ornaments, inartistic. For a work of art, the whole of which is conceived in great, simple, harmonious parts, makes indeed a noble and dignified impression, but the peculiar enjoyment which the pleasing produces can only find place in the harmony of all developed details.

But it is precisely here that the building which we are considering satisfies us in the highest degree, for we see all the ornaments fully suited to every part which they adorn ; they are subordinate to it ; they seem to have grown out of it. Such a variety always gives great pleasure, since it is derived from the suitable, and therefore at the same time awakens the feeling of unity, and it is only in such a case that the execution is prized as the summit of art.

By such means, now, was a solid piece of masonry, an impenetrable wall, which had, moreover, to announce itself as the base of two towers, high as heaven, made to appear to the eye as if resting on itself, consisting in itself, but at the same time light and delicate, and, though pierced through in a thousand places, to give the idea of indestructible firmness.

This riddle is solved in the happiest manner. The openings in the wall, the solid parts of the same, the pillars, each has its special character, which proceeds from its particular destination ; this communicates itself by degrees to the subdivisions ; therefore everything is adorned in suitable taste, the great as well as the small is in the right place, can be easily comprehended, and so what is pleasing presents



itself in what is vast. I would mention only the doors sinking in perspective into the thickness of the wall, adorned without end in their pillars and pointed arches, the window with its artistic rose springing out of the round form, the outline of its framework as well as the slender reed-like pillars of the perpendicular compartments. Let one represent to himself the columns retreating step by step accompanied by slender, light-pillared, pointed structures, likewise striving upwards and furnished with canopies to shelter the images of the saints, and how at last every rib, every boss, seems like a flower-head and row of leaves, or some other natural object transformed into stone. Let one compare the building, if not itself, yet representations of the whole, and of its parts, for the purpose of judging and giving life to what I have said. To many it may seem to be exaggerated, for I myself, though carried away in affection for this work at first sight, required a long time to make myself intimately acquainted with its value.

Having grown up among those who found fault with Gothic architecture, I cherished my aversion from the abundantly over-loaded, complicated ornaments which, by their arbitrary nature, made a religious, gloomy character highly repugnant to me. I strengthened myself in this dislike, since only spiritless works of this kind had come before my sight, in which one could perceive neither good proportions nor a pure consistency. But here I thought I saw a new revelation of it since what was worthy of censure by no means appeared, but rather the contrary view forced itself upon me.

But now, the longer I looked and considered, I thought that I discovered still greater merits beyond what I have already mentioned. The right proportion of the larger divisions was found out, the ornamentation even as rich as judicious down to the minutest part; but now I recognised the connection of these manifold ornaments among each other, the transition from one leading part to another, the endowing of details homogeneous indeed, but yet greatly varying in form from the saint to the monster, from the leaf to the scallop. The more I investigated, the more I was astonished, the more I amused and wearied myself with measuring and drawing, much the more did my attachment increase, so that I applied much time, partly

in studying what actually existed, partly in restoring in my mind and on paper what was lacking and incomplete, especially in the towers.

Since now I found that the building had been based on old German ground, and had grown thus far in genuine German times, and that the name of the master on his modest gravestone was likewise of native sound and origin, I ventured, being incited by the worth of this work of art, to change the hitherto desired appellation of Gothic architecture, and to claim it for our nation as German architecture ; but then I did not fail to bring to light my patriotic views, first orally, and afterwards in a small essay dedicated to the memory of (D. M.<sup>1</sup>) Ervinus of Steinbach.

If my biographical narrative should come down to the epoch in which the said sheet appeared in print, which Herder afterwards inserted in his pamphlet "Of German Manners and Art," much more will be said on this important subject. But before I turn myself away from it this time, I will take the opportunity of vindicating the motto prefixed to the present volume with those who may have entertained some doubt about it. I knew, indeed, very well that against this honest, hopeful, old German saying : "What one wishes in youth, one has abundance of in old age," much contrary experience may be brought forward, much trivial comment made ; but much also may be said in favour of it, and I will declare what I think on the matter.

Our wishes are presentiments of the capabilities which lie in us, harbingers of that which we shall be in a condition to perform. Whatever we are able and would like to do, presents itself to our imagination, as without us and in the future ; we feel a longing for that which we already possess in secret. Thus a passionate anticipating grasp transforms the truly possible into an imaginary reality. If such a bias lies decidedly in our nature, then with every step of our development will a part of the first wish be fulfilled ; under favourable circumstances in the direct way, under unfavourable in the circuitous way from which we always return back again to the other. We see men by perseverance arrive at earthly wealth, they surround themselves with riches, splendour, and external honour. Others

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<sup>1</sup> *Diis manibus.*

strive yet more securely after intellectual advantages, gain for themselves a clear survey over things, a tranquillity of mind, and a safety for the present and the future. But now there is a third direction, which is compounded of both, and the result of which must be most surely successful. When, namely, the youth of a man falls into a pregnant time, when production outweighs destruction, and in him the presentiment is early awakened as to what such an epoch demands and promises, he will then, forced by outward inducements into an active interest, take hold, now here, now there, and the wish to be active on many sides will become lively within him. But now human limitation is associated with so many accidental hindrances, that here a thing once begun remains unfinished, there a thing once grasped falls from the hand, and one wish crumbles away after another. But if these wishes had sprung out of a pure heart, suited to the requirements of the time, one could quietly let them fall right and left, and be assured that not only must this be found out and picked up again, but also that many kindred things, which one has never touched, yes, and never even thought of, will come to light. If now we see during our lifetime that performed by others, to which we ourselves felt an earlier call, which we had been obliged to give up with much besides, then the beautiful feeling enters the mind that only mankind taken together is the true man, and that the individual can only be joyful and happy when he has the courage to feel himself in the whole. This consideration is here in the right place ; for when I reflect on the affection which drew me to those old buildings, when I calculate the time which I devoted to the Strasburg cathedral alone, the attention with which I afterwards regarded the cathedral at Cologne and that at Freiburg, and always felt more the worth of these buildings, I could even blame myself for having afterwards lost sight of them altogether ; nay, attracted by a more developed art, for having left them completely in the background. But when I see now in the latest times attention being again directed to those objects, when I see affection, nay, passion for them appearing and flourishing, when I see competent young persons seized with this passion recklessly devoting powers, time, care, and property to these memorials of a past world, then I am reminded with pleasure

that what I formerly would and wished had a value. With satisfaction I see that they not only knew how to prize what was done by our forefathers, but even from existing unfinished beginnings they try to represent, in pictures at least, the original design, so as to make us acquainted with the thought which is ever the beginning and end of all undertakings, and they strive with considerate earnestness to clear up and vivify what seems to be a confused past. Here especially I applaud the gallant Sulpiz Boisserée, who is unweariedly employed in a magnificent series of copper-plates, in exhibiting the cathedral of Cologne as the model of those vast conceptions, the spirit of which, like that of Babel, strove up to heaven, and which were so out of proportion to earthly means that they necessarily stopped in their execution. If we have been hitherto astonished that such buildings proceeded only so far, we shall learn with the greatest wonder what was really designed to be done.

May the literary and artistic undertakings of this kind be fittingly promoted by all who have power, wealth, and influence, so that the great and gigantic idea of our forefathers may come to our contemplation, and that we may form a conception of what they dared to wish. The insight arising from this will not remain unfruitful, and the judgment will, at length, be in a position to exercise itself on these works with justice. Nay, this will be done most thoroughly, if our active young friend, besides the monograph devoted to the cathedral of Cologne, pursues in detail the history of our mediæval architecture. When thus further comes to light what is to be known about the practical exercise of the art, when it is represented in all its fundamental features by comparison with the Greco-Roman and Oriental-Egyptian, little can remain to be done in this department. But I, when the results of such patriotic labours are published, as they are now in friendly private communications, shall be able to repeat with true content that motto in its best sense : "What one wishes in youth, in old age one has in abundance."

But if one in such operations, which belong to centuries, can trust oneself to time and await the opportunity, there are, on the contrary, other things which in youth must be enjoyed at once, fresh, like ripe fruit. Let me be permitted with this sudden transition to make mention of

dancing, of which the ear is reminded as the eye is of the cathedral every day and every hour in Strasburg and in Alsace. From early youth my father had given me and my sister instruction in dancing, which must have suited strangely enough so serious a man, but he did not allow himself to be put out of countenance by it ; he instructed us in the most precise fashion in the positions and steps, and when he had brought us far enough to dance a minuet, he played on a *flute-douce* something intelligible to us in three-four time, and we moved to it as well as we could. On the French theatre, likewise, I had from my youth upwards, seen, if not ballets, yet *pas seuls* and *pas de deux*, and had noticed in them many strange movements of the feet and all sorts of jumps. When we now had had enough of the minuet, I begged my father for other dance music, of which our music books in their jigs<sup>1</sup> and murkies<sup>2</sup> offered us a rich supply, and I immediately found out for myself the steps and other motions for them, while the time was quite suited for my limbs, and, as it were, born with them. This pleased my father to a certain degree ; indeed, he made for us and himself a joke, " Let the monkeys dance in this way." After my misfortune with Gretchen, and during all my stay in Leipsic, I did not make my appearance again in the dancing-room ; still more do I know that when at a ball they forced me into a minuet, measure and motion seemed to have gone away from my limbs, and I could no more remember the steps nor the figure, so that I should have endured shame and disgrace had not the greater part of the spectators maintained that my awkward behaviour was pure obstinacy with the intention of depriving the ladies of all desire to invite me and draw me into their circle against my will.

During my stay in Frankfort I was quite cut off from such pleasures, but in Strasburg, with other enjoyments, there arose in my limbs the faculty of keeping time. On Sundays and weekdays one sauntered by no pleasure ground without finding there a joyous crowd assembled for the dance, and for the most part revolving in the circle. Moreover, there were private balls in country houses, and people were

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<sup>1</sup> An old-fashioned, lively dance.

<sup>2</sup> Dance tune with a monotonous bass accompaniment.

talking of the brilliant masquerades of the coming winter. Here, indeed, I should have been out of my place and useless to the company, when a friend, who waltzed very well, advised me to practise myself in less good society, and then I should be worth something in the best. He brought me to a dancing-master, who was known to be very skilled ; this man promised me, when I had in some degree repeated the first elements and made myself master of them, then to lead me further. He was one of the dry, skilled French characters, and received me in a friendly manner. I paid him a month in advance, and received twelve tickets, for which he agreed to give me certain hours' instruction. He was strict and precise, but not pedantic ; and as I had already had some previous practice, I soon gave him satisfaction and received his praise.

One circumstance, however, greatly lightened the instruction of this teacher ; he had, namely, two daughters, both pretty and both still under twenty years. Instructed in this art from their youth upwards, they showed themselves very skilful, and might have been, as partners, soon able to help the most awkward scholars to some cultivation. They were both very polite, only spoke French, and I on my part did my best that I might not appear clumsy and ridiculous before them. I had the good fortune that they also praised me, and were always willing to dance a minuet to their father's little violin, and, indeed, what was more difficult for them, to initiate me by degrees into waltzing and whirling. Moreover, the father did not seem to have many pupils, and they led a lonely life. Therefore, after the lesson they often asked me to remain with them and chat away the time for a little ; this I did the more willingly as the younger one pleased me well, and, in general, they both behaved very becomingly. I often read aloud something from a novel, and they did the same. The elder one, who was as pretty, perhaps still prettier, than the second, but did not harmonise with my taste so well as the latter, always conducted herself more obligingly and more kindly in every respect. She was always at hand during the lesson, and often spun it out ; therefore I sometimes thought that I was bound to offer back a couple of tickets to her father, which, however, he did not accept. The younger one, on the contrary, though she did nothing unfriendly towards

me, was yet rather silent, and let herself be called by her father to relieve the elder. The cause of this became clear to me one evening. For when after the end of the dance I was about to go into the sitting-room with the elder, she held me back, and said : " Let us stay here a little more, for I will confess to you that my sister has a fortune-teller with her, who is to reveal to her how matters stand with an absent lover, on whom all her heart hangs, upon whom she has placed all her hope. Mine is free," she continued, " and I must accustom myself to see it despised." Upon this I said to her some pretty things, while I replied that she could at once convince herself how matters stood, if she also consulted the wise woman, that I would also do it, for I had long wished to learn something of the kind, but hitherto had lacked faith. She blamed me for this, and assured me that nothing in the world was more sure than the declarations of this oracle, only one must not consult it out of sport and mischief, but only in real affairs. However, I compelled her at last to go with me into that room, as soon as she was assured that the consultation was over. We found her sister in high spirits, and also to me she was more complaisant than usual, sportive, and almost witty ; for since she seemed to be secure of an absent friend, she may have thought it natural to be a little kind to a present friend of her sister's, for such she thought me to be.

The old woman was now flattered, and good payment was promised if she would tell the truth to the elder sister and to me. With the usual preparations and ceremonies she displayed her wares in order to prophesy the fair one's fortune first. She contemplated the position of the cards carefully, but seemed to hesitate, and would not speak out. " I see indeed," said the younger sister, who was already more closely acquainted with such a magic tablet, " you hesitate and do not wish to disclose anything disagreeable to my sister ; but that is a cursed card." The elder one turned pale, but composed herself and said : " Only speak ; it won't cost you your head." The old woman, after a deep sigh, showed her that she was in love, that she was not loved in return, that another person stood between, and other things of like kind. One saw the good girl's embarrassment. The old woman thought to improve the matter somewhat by giving hopes of letters and money. " Letters,"

said the lovely child, "I am not expecting, and money I don't desire. If it is true, as you say, that I love, I deserve a heart that loves me in return." "Let us see if it will not be better," replied the old woman, while she shuffled the cards and laid them out a second time; but before the eyes of all of us it had only become still worse. The fair one stood not only more lonely, but also surrounded by many a sorrow, her friend had moved rather further off and the intervening figures nearer. The old woman wanted to lay out the cards a third time in the hopes of a better prospect, but the beautiful child could restrain herself no longer; she broke into uncontrollable weeping, her lovely bosom heaved violently, she turned round and ran out of the room. I did not know what I should do. Affection kept me with the present one; pity drove me to the other; my situation was painful enough. "Comfort Lucinda," said the younger sister; "go after her." I hesitated; how could I comfort her without at least assuring her of some sort of affection, and could I do that at such a moment in a cold, moderate fashion? "Let us go together," said I to Emilia. "I don't know if my presence will do her good," she replied. Yet we went, but found the door bolted. Lucinda did not answer; we might knock, shout, entreat, as we would. "We must let her have her own way," said Emilia; "she will not leave it otherwise now!" And, indeed, when I called to mind her manner from our first acquaintance, she had always something vehement and unequal about her, and she showed her affection for me chiefly in not behaving to me with rudeness. What should I do? I paid the old woman richly for the harm she had caused, and wanted to go, when Emilia said: "I stipulate that the cards shall now be cut for you, too." The old woman was ready. "Do not let me be present," I said, and hurried downstairs.

The next day I hadn't the courage to go there. The third day, early in the morning, Emilia sent me word by a boy, who had brought many messages to me from the sisters and taken back fruit and flowers in return, that I should not fail to-day. I came at the usual time and found the father alone, who in many respects improved my paces and steps, my going and coming, my bearing and behaviour, and, moreover, seemed to be satisfied with me. The youngest came towards the end of the hour and danced with me a



very graceful minuet, in which her movements were extraordinarily pleasing, and her father declared that he had rarely seen a prettier or more nimble pair upon his floor. After the lesson I went, as usual, into the sitting-room ; the father left us alone ; I missed Lucinda. "She is in bed," said Emilia, "and I am glad of it ; do not be concerned about it. Her mental illness is first alleviated, when she thinks she is bodily ill ; she does not want to die, and so she does then what we wish. We have certain family remedies which she takes, and reposes, and so by degrees the swelling waves subside. She is, indeed, too good and amiable in such an imaginary illness ; and as she is essentially quite well, and is only attacked by passion, she imagines all kinds of romantic deaths, with which she frightens herself in a pleasant manner, like children, when we tell them ghost stories. Thus, yesterday evening she declared to me with great vehemence that this time she would certainly die, and that only when she was really near death they should bring again before her the ungrateful false friend who at first had acted so handsomely towards her, and now treated her so ill ; she would make him bitter reproaches and then at once give up the ghost." "I know that I am not guilty" I said, "of having expressed any affection for her. I know somebody who can but bear me witness in this respect." Emilia smiled and replied : "I understand you, and if we are not discreet and determined we shall find ourselves together in a bad plight. What will you say if I beg of you not to continue your lessons further ? You have from the last month still four tickets, and my father has already declared that he finds it unjustifiable to take money from you any longer, unless you wish to devote yourself to the art of dancing in a more serious manner ; what a young man in the world requires, that you now possess." "Do you, Emilia, give me this advice to avoid your house ?" replied I. "Yes, I do," she said, "but not of myself. Only listen. When you hurried away the day before yesterday, I had the cards cut for you, and the same sentence was repeated three times, and each time with greater force. You were surrounded by everything good and pleasing, by friends and great gentlemen ; money, too, was not wanting. The ladies kept themselves at some distance. My poor sister in particular stood always the

furthest off ; one other advanced constantly nearer to you, but never came to your side, for a third person stood between. I will only confess to you that I thought I was meant by the second lady, and after this confession you will but understand my well-meant counsel. To an absent friend I have promised my heart and my hand, and up till now I loved him beyond everything ; yet it might be possible for your presence to become more important to me than hitherto, and what kind of a position would you have between two sisters, of whom the one by your affection, the other by your coldness, you have made unhappy, and all this trouble about nothing, and for a short time ? For if we had not known already who you are and what your expectations, the cards would have placed it before my eyes in the clearest manner. Fare you well," she said, and gave me her hand. I hesitated. " Now," she said, as she led me towards the door, " that it may really be the last time that we shall speak to each other, take what I would otherwise have denied you." She fell upon my neck and kissed me most tenderly. I embraced her and pressed her to me. At this moment the side door flew open, and her sister, in a light but becoming nightdress, sprang out and said : " You shall not be the only one to take leave of him." Emilia let me go, and Lucinda seized me, clasped herself fast to my heart, pressed her black locks upon my cheeks, and remained for some time in this position. And so I found myself in the dilemma between two sisters, as Emilia a moment before had prophesied. Lucinda let me loose, and looked earnestly into my face. I would have taken her hand and said something friendly, but she turned away, walked up and down the room with violent steps for some time, and then threw herself into the corner of the sofa. Emilia went to her, but was immediately repulsed, and here arose a scene which is yet painful to me in the recollection of it, and which, though in reality it had nothing theatrical about it, but was quite suitable to a lively young French-woman, could only be worthily repeated in the theatre by a good and feeling actress.

Lucinda overwhelmed her sister with a thousand reproaches. " This is not the first heart," she cried out, " that was inclining to me, and which you have turned away. Was it not just so with him who is absent, who

at last betrothed himself to you under my very eyes? I had to look on; I endured it, but I know how many thousand tears it cost me. This one, too, you have now taken away from me, without letting the other go; and how many do you not manage to keep at once? I am frank and good natured, and every one thinks he knows me soon and can neglect me; you are sly and quiet, and people think wonders of what may be concealed behind you. But there is nothing behind but a cold, selfish heart, which knows how to sacrifice everything to itself; this nobody knows so easily because it lies deeply hidden in your bosom; just as little do they know of my warm, true heart, which I carry openly on my face."

Emilia was silent, and had sat down near her sister, who in her speaking became constantly more excited, and let out certain private matters which it was not exactly proper for me to know. Emilia, on the other hand, who was trying to pacify her sister, gave me a sign behind that I should withdraw, but as jealousy and suspicion see with a thousand eyes, Lucinda seemed to have noticed this also. She sprang up and advanced towards me, but not with vehemence. She stood before me, and seemed to be thinking of something. Then she said: "I know that I have lost you, I make no further claims upon you. But neither shall you have him, sister!" With these words she grasped me very strongly by the head, while she thrust both her hands into my locks, pressed my face on hers, and kissed me repeatedly on the mouth. "Now," she cried, "fear my curse! Woe upon woe for ever and ever who kisses these lips for the first time after me! Dare to have anything more to do with him! I know heaven hears me this time; and you, sir, hasten now, hasten away as fast as you can!"

I flew down the stairs, with the firm determination never to enter the house again.

## BOOK X

THE German poets, since they, as members of a corporation, no longer stood as one man,<sup>1</sup> did not enjoy the smallest advantage in the civic world. They had neither support, standing, nor respect, except in so far as their other status was favourable to them, and therefore it was just a matter of chance whether talent was born to honour or disgrace. A poor mortal with the consciousness of intellect and faculties was obliged to drag along painfully through life, and to squander the gift which he had, perchance, received from the muses, owing to the pressure of momentary necessities. Occasional poems, the first and most genuine of all kinds of poetry, had become despicable to such a degree that the nation cannot even now come to a conception of the high merit of the same ; and a poet, if he did not strike altogether into Günther's path, appeared in the world subservient in the most melancholy way, as a jester and parasite, so that both on the theatre and on the stage of life he represented a character which one could make game of at pleasure.

If, on the other hand, the Muse associated herself with men of position, these received thereby a lustre which was reflected back on the donor. Noblemen, well versed in life, like Hagedorn, dignified citizens, like Brockes, decidedly learned men, like Haller, appeared among the first in the nation, equal to the most eminent and most prized. Specially, too, were those persons honoured, who, in addition to their pleasing talent distinguished themselves as active, faithful men of business. In this way Uz, Rabener, and Weisse enjoyed a respect of a quite peculiar kind, because one had here to value, when combined, those heterogeneous qualities which are seldom found united with one another.

But now the time was to come when poetic genius was

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<sup>1</sup> As they had done at the time of the "Meistersingers."

to be made aware of itself, to create for itself its own relations, and understand how to lay the foundations of an independent dignity. Everything combined in Klopstock to found such an epoch. He was, considered from the side of the senses and morality, a pure young man. Seriously and thoroughly educated, he places, from his youth up, a great value on himself ~~and~~ all that he does, and while prudently measuring out beforehand the steps of his life, turns with a presentiment of the whole strength of his internal being to the loftiest subject imaginable. The Messiah, a name which betokens infinite attributes, was to be glorified afresh by him. The Redeemer was to be the hero whom the poet thought to accompany through earthly lowliness and sorrows to the highest heavenly triumphs. Everything godlike, angelic, and human that lay in the young soul was here called into requisition. He, brought up on the Bible and nourished by its strength, now lives with patriarchs, prophets, and forerunners, as if they were present ; yet all these are only evoked from ages to draw a bright halo round the One whose humiliation they behold with astonishment, and in whose exaltation they are to take a glorious part. For at last, after gloomy and dreadful hours, the everlasting Judge will uncloud his countenance, again acknowledge his Son and Fellow-God ; and he, on the other hand, will lead again to Him the men who have been alienated, nay, even a fallen spirit. The living heavens shout with a thousand angel voices round the throne and a radiance of love gushes out over the universe, which had shortly before fixed its gaze on a fearful place of sacrifice. The heavenly peace which Klopstock felt by the conception and execution of this poem, imparts itself even now to every one who reads the first two cantos, without allowing the demands to be noticeable which an advancing cultivation cannot willingly give up.

The dignity of the subject elevated for the poet the feeling of his own personality. That he himself hereafter would enter into those choirs, that the God-Man would distinguish him, nay, would, face to face, give him thanks for his labours, which already here every feeling, pious heart had fondly paid in many a pure tear—these were such innocent, child-like thoughts and hopes as only a well constituted mind can possess and cherish. Thus Klopstock gained the perfect right to regard himself as a consecrated person, and so, too,

in his actions he studied the most scrupulous purity. Even in his old age it troubled him uncommonly that he had given his earliest love to a lady,<sup>1</sup> who, as she married another, left him in uncertainty, whether she had really loved him or been worthy of him. The sentiments which bound him to Meta,<sup>2</sup> their inward, tranquil affection, their short, sacred married life, the aversion of the surviving husband from a second union, all is of that kind which may well be remembered hereafter in the circle of the blessed. This honourable conduct towards himself was still more enhanced by his being favourably received for a long time in Denmark, where he was popular, in the house of a great and, humanly speaking, excellent statesman.<sup>3</sup> Here in a higher circle, which certainly was exclusive, but at the same time devoted to external manners and attention to the world, his bent became more decided. A composed demeanour, a measured speech, a laconic diction, even when he spoke openly and decidedly, gave him through his whole life a certain diplomatic, ministerial consequence, which seemed to be at variance with those tender, natural feelings, although both sprang from one source. Of all this his first works give a clear transcript and model, and therefore they could not but win an incredible influence. That, however, he personally advanced others who were struggling in life and poetry has scarcely been mentioned as one of his decided characteristics.

But just such a furtherance of young people in literary action and pursuit, a hopeful pleasure in bringing forward men not favoured by fortune and making the way easy to them, has rendered illustrious one German who, in regard to the dignity which he gave himself, may be named as the second, but, in reference to his living influence, as the first. It will escape no one that Gleim<sup>4</sup> is here meant. Possessed of an obscure, indeed, but lucrative office, residing in a pleasantly situated spot, not too large, and enlivened by military, civic, and literary activity, whence came the revenues of a great and wealthy foundation, not without a

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<sup>1</sup> Sophie Schmidt, celebrated in the "Odes" as Fanny.

<sup>2</sup> Meta Mollar, called Margarethe in his poems. Their married life was from 1754-1758.

<sup>3</sup> Count Bernstoff.

<sup>4</sup> The well-known German poet, 1719-1803. Often called "Father Gleim" because of the assistance he gave to young poets.

part of them remaining behind for the advantage of the place, he felt within himself a lively, productive impulse, which, however, with all its strength, was not quite sufficient for him, and therefore he gave himself up to another, perhaps mightier impulse, namely, that of making others produce something. Both activities were intertwined incessantly during his whole long life. He could as easily have given up taking breath as give up writing poetry and making presents, and by helping needy talents of all kinds over earlier or later embarrassments, and thereby contributing to the honour of literature, he won for himself so many friends, debtors, and dependents, that one willingly let his diffuse verses pass, since one could give nothing in return for his rich benefits but endurance of his poetry.

Now that high conception which both these men might well form of their worth, and by which others were induced to think themselves something, has produced very great and fine results both in public and private. But this consciousness, honourable as it is, called down a peculiar evil for themselves, for those around them, and for their time. If, according to their intellectual effect, one may unhesitatingly call both these men great, with respect to the world they remained but small, and regarded from the standpoint of a more stirring life their external position was naught. The day is long, and so is the night; one cannot always be writing poetry, or doing, or giving; their time could not be filled up like that of people of the world, and men of rank and wealth; they therefore set too high a value on their particular limited circumstances, an importance to their daily affairs, which they should only have allowed themselves among each other; they took more delight in their own jokes than was reasonable, which, though they made the moment agreeable, yet could be of no consequence in the end. They received praise and honour from others, as they deserved; they gave it back, with measure indeed, but always profusely; and because they felt that their affection was worth much, it pleased them to express it repeatedly, and in this they spared neither paper nor ink. There arose those correspondences, at the deficiency of which in solid matter the modern world wonders, nor can it be blamed when it hardly understands the possibility of eminent men being able to delight themselves in such an interchange

of nothing, or when it expresses the wish that such pages might have been left unprinted. But we allow these few volumes always to stand near so many others on our bookshelves, if we have learned from them the fact that even the most eminent man lives only by the day, and enjoys but a sorry entertainment, when he throws himself too much back on himself and neglects to grasp the fullness of the external world, where alone he can find nourishment for his growth and at the same time a standard for it. The activity of these men was in its finest bloom when we young people began also to bestir ourselves in our circle, and I was pretty much in the way with younger friends, if not with older persons, of coming to such mutual compliments, forbearance, and lifting one another's minds up. In my sphere, what I produced could always be reckoned good. Ladies, friends, and patrons will not consider that bad which is undertaken and written out of affection for them. From such obligations at last there arises the expression of an empty satisfaction with each other, in the phrases of which a character is easily lost, if it does not from time to time steel itself to higher excellence.

And so I had the happiness to say that, by means of an unexpected acquaintance, all the self-complacency, love of the looking-glass, vanity, pride, and haughtiness, which might have been resting or working within me, was exposed to a very hard trial, which was unique in its way, by no means in accordance with the time, and therefore the more searching, and making itself the more felt. For the most important event, which was to have the weightiest consequences for me, was my acquaintance with Herder, and the closer connection with him which sprang from it. He accompanied the Prince Holstein-Eutin on his travels, who was in a melancholy state of mind, and had come with him to Strasburg. Our Society, as soon as it knew of his presence, was seized with a great longing to approach him, and the good fortune happened to me first, quite unexpectedly and by chance. I had gone into the *Gasthof zum Geist* to inquire after some important stranger or other. Just at the bottom of the staircase I found a man who was on the point of going upstairs, and whom I might have taken for a clergyman. His powdered hair was put up in a round curl, his black clothes also distinguished him, but still more



a black silk mantle, the ends of which he had gathered up and put in his pocket. This somewhat striking but, on the whole, polite and pleasing figure, of whom I had already been told, did not leave me in doubt that he was the celebrated newcomer, and my address must have convinced him at once that I knew him. He asked my name, which could be of no significance to him ; but my frankness seemed to please him, since he returned it with great friendliness, and as we went up the stairs showed himself ready immediately for an animated conversation. It has escaped my memory whom we visited then ; it is enough to say that at parting I asked permission to wait on him at his own house, which he granted me kindly enough. I did not neglect availing myself of this favour repeatedly, and was continually more attracted by him. He had a certain softness in his manner, which was very suitable and becoming without being exactly easy. A round face, an imposing forehead, a somewhat snub nose, a mouth rather pouting, but highly characteristic, pleasing, and amiable. Under black eyebrows a pair of coal-black eyes, which did not fail of their effect, though one of them used to be red and inflamed. By many questions he tried to make himself acquainted with me and my condition, and his power of attraction worked upon me with ever-growing strength. Generally speaking, I was of a very confiding nature, and before him in particular I had no sort of secret. It was not long, however, before the harsh side of his nature began to appear, and placed me in no small uneasiness. I related to him many of my youthful activities and tastes, and, among others, of a collection of seals, which I had principally got together by means of our family friend, who had an extensive correspondence. I had arranged them according to the "State Calendar," and with this opportunity had become well acquainted with the whole of the potentates, greater and lesser powers and authorities down to the nobility under them ; and their heraldic insignia had often come to the aid of my memory, and in particular at the ceremonies of the coronation. I spoke of these things with some complacency ; but he was of another opinion, and not only stripped the subject of all interest, but knew how to make it ridiculous, nay, almost to disgust me with it.

From this spirit of contradiction I had yet much to

endure, for he decided, partly because he intended to separate from the prince, partly on account of the trouble with his eye, to remain in Strasburg. This complaint is one of the most troublesome and unpleasant, and the more annoying as it can only be cured by a painful, highly irritating, and uncertain operation. The lachrymal sac is closed below so that the moisture contained therein cannot flow off to the nose, and so much the less when the aperture in the adjacent bone is deficient, by which the secretion should naturally pass. The bottom of the sac must therefore be cut open and the bone bored through, when a horse-hair is drawn through the punctum lachrymale, then down through the opened sac, and the new channel thus put in connection with it, and the hair is daily moved backwards and forwards in order to restore the communication between the two parts, all of which cannot be done or attained if an incision is not made first externally in that place.

Herder was now separated from the prince, and was moved into lodgings of his own ; the decision was taken to have himself operated on by Lobstein. Here those exercises, by which I had sought to blunt my sensibility, stood me in good stead ; I could be present at the operation, and was able to assist and be helpful to so worthy a man in many ways. Here now I found every reason to admire his great constancy and endurance, for neither at the numerous surgical incisions, nor at the frequently repeated painful dressings, did he show himself in the least degree irritable, and he seemed to be of us the one who suffered least ; but in the intervals, indeed, we had to endure the change of his temper in many ways. I say we, for besides myself there was a pleasant Russian, named Peglow, mostly with him. This man had been an earlier acquaintance of Herder's in Riga ; though no longer a youth, he was trying to perfect himself in surgery under Lobstein's guidance. Herder could be charmingly prepossessing and witty, but could just as easily put forward an ill-humoured side. This attraction and repulsion all men have, indeed, according to their nature, some more, some less, some in slower, some in quicker waves ; few can in reality control their peculiarities in this respect, many do so in appearance. As for Herder, I ascribed the preponderance of his contradictory, bitter, biting humour certainly to his disease and the sufferings

arising from it. This case often occurs in life, and one does not sufficiently consider the moral effect of conditions of illness, and therefore judges many characters very unjustly, because one assumes all men are healthy, and expects them to conduct themselves accordingly.

During the whole time of this cure I visited Herder morning and evening; I even remained whole days with him, and in a short time accustomed myself all the more to his scolding and fault-finding, as I daily learnt to treasure more his beautiful and great qualities, his extensive knowledge, his profound insight. The influence of this good-natured blusterer was great and important. He was five years older than myself, which in younger days already makes a great difference, and as I acknowledged him for what he was, since I knew how to value that which he had already produced, he necessarily gained a great superiority over me. But the situation was not comfortable; for older persons, with whom I had hitherto associated, had sought to form me with indulgence, perhaps had even spoiled me by their forbearance; but from Herder one could never expect approval, behave as one might. While now, on the one side, my great affection and reverence for him, and on the other, the discomfort which he excited in me, were continually at strife with each other, there arose a struggle within me, the first of its kind which I had experienced in my life. Since his conversations were at all times important, whether he asked, answered, or communicated his opinions in any other way, he could not but advance me daily, nay, hourly, to new views. In Leipsic I had accustomed myself to a narrow and circumscribed existence, and my general knowledge of German literature could not be extended by my situation in Frankfort; nay, those mystic and religious-chemical occupations had led me into obscure regions, and what had been passing for some years back in the wide literary world, had remained for the most part unknown to me. Now, by Herder, I was at once made acquainted with all the new aspiration, and with all the directions which it seemed to be taking. He had already made himself sufficiently famous, and through his "Fragments," his "Critical Woods" (*Kritische Wälder*),<sup>1</sup> and other works, had immedi-

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<sup>1</sup> First published in 1769.

ately placed himself by the side of the most eminent men, who for a long time had drawn towards them the eyes of their country. What an agitation there must have been in such a mind—what a fermentation there must have been in such a nature—can neither be understood nor described. But great, certainly, was the hidden effort, as one will readily admit, when one reflects for how many years afterwards and how much he has done and produced.

We had not long lived together in this manner when he confided to me that he intended to compete for the prize which was offered at Berlin for the best treatise on the origin of language. His work was already near completion, and as he wrote a very neat hand, he could soon communicate to me in parts a legible manuscript. I had never reflected about such subjects; I was yet too deeply involved in the midst of things to have thought about their beginning and end. The question, too, seemed to me in some measure an idle one; for if God had created man as man, so there was created with him language just as much as walking erect, so soon as he must have remarked that he could walk and take hold of things, he must have been aware that he could sing with his throat, and modify these tones in various ways by the tongue, palate, and lips. If man was of divine origin, so was also his language itself, and if man considered in the circle of Nature was a natural being, his speech was likewise natural. These two things, like soul and body, I could never separate. Süsmilch, with a crude realism, yet with somewhat fantastic ideas, had decided for the divine origin—that is, that God had played the schoolmaster to the first men. Herder's treatise went to show that man as man could and must have attained to language from his own powers. I read the treatise with great pleasure and to the special strengthening of my mind; only I did not stand high enough either in knowledge or thought to base a judgment upon it. I therefore expressed my applause to the author, adding only a few comments which flowed from my way of viewing things. But one was received just like the other, one was scolded and blamed, whether one agreed with him conditionally or unconditionally. The fat surgeon had less patience than I; he humorously declined the communication of the prize essay, and affirmed that he was not equipped for thinking upon such abstract

matters. He urged us rather to a game of l'hombre, which we usually played together in the evening.

During so troublesome and painful a cure our Herder lost nothing of his vivacity, but it became always less amiable. He could not write a note to ask for anything which was not spiced with some mockery or other. So, for example, he wrote to me once :—

“ If those letters of Brutus thou hast in thy Cicero’s letters,  
 Thou, whom consolers of schools, decked out in magnificent bindings,  
 Smooth from their well-planed shelves, yet more from the outside than inside,  
 Thou, who from gods art descended, or Goths, or from origin filthy,<sup>1</sup>  
 Goethe, send them to me.”

It was not, indeed, polite that he should allow himself this jest with my name ; for a man’s own name is not a cloak which merely hangs about him, and which, perchance, one may safely twitch and tear, but a perfectly fitting garment, grown over and over him like his skin, which one cannot scratch and scrape without wounding the man himself. The first reproach, on the contrary, was better founded. I had brought with me to Strasburg the authors I had obtained by exchange from Langer, and also various fine editions from my father’s collection, and had set them up on a bookcase with the best intentions of using them. But how could my time, which I split up into a hundred activities, be sufficient for that ? Herder, who was most attentive to books, since he had need of them every moment, perceived my fine collection at his first visit, but soon saw that I made no use of them ; he, therefore, as the greatest enemy of all false appearance and ostentation, on occasions used to make fun of me about this.

Yet another sarcastic poem occurs to me which he sent me one evening, when I had been telling him a great deal about the Dresden gallery. I had not, indeed, penetrated into the higher meaning of the Italian school ; but Domenico Feti,<sup>2</sup> an excellent artist, though a humorist, and therefore

<sup>1</sup> The German word is Koth, and the object of the line is to show a play on the words “ Goethe,” “ Götter,” “ Gothen,” and “ Koth.”

<sup>2</sup> An Italian historical painter, 1589-1624.

not of the first rank, had appealed to me much. Religious subjects had to be painted. He kept himself to the New Testament parables, and was fond of representing them with much originality, taste, and good humour. He brought them altogether into ordinary life, and the witty as well as naïve details of his compositions, recommended by a free pencil, had made a vivid impression upon me. At this, my childish enthusiasm for art, Herder sneered in the following way :—

“ From sympathy,  
The master I like best of all  
Domenico Feti they call.  
A parable from Scripture he is able  
Nicely to turn into a silly fable.  
From sympathy—thou silly parable ! ”

Many other jokes of the kind I could mention, more or less clear or abstruse, cheerful or bitter. They did not annoy me, but made me feel uncomfortable. Yet since I knew how to value highly everything that contributed to my cultivation, and I had often given up former opinions and affections, I soon accommodated myself, and only sought, so far as was possible from my point of view at that time, to distinguish just blame from unjust invective ; and so there was no day then which had not been most fruitful and instructive.

I was made acquainted with poetry from quite a different side, and another light from heretofore, and in one, too, which suited me well. The poetic art of the Hebrews, which he treated cleverly after the manner of his predecessor Lowth<sup>1</sup>—popular poetry, the traditions of which in Alsace he urged us to search after, and the oldest records existing as poetry—bore witness that poetry in general was a gift to the world and to nations, and not the private inheritance of a few refined, cultivated men. I swallowed all this, and the more eager I was in receiving, the more liberal was he in giving, and we spent the most interesting hours together. My other studies of Nature which I had begun I tried to continue, and as one always has time enough when one will

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Lowth, 1710-87, author of “*Prælectiones de poeti Sacra Hebræorum*,” Professor of Poetry at Oxford, 1741.

apply it well, so amongst them I managed to do twice or three times as much as usual. As to the fullness of these few weeks, which we lived together, I can well say that everything which Herder afterwards carried out gradually was then indicated in germ, and that I thereby fell into the fortunate condition that I could complete and attach to something higher, and expand all that I had hitherto thought, learned, and made my own. If Herder had had more method I should have found in him the most precious guidance for giving a durable direction to my cultivation, but he was more disposed to examine and stimulate than to lead and conduct. Thus he at first made me acquainted with Hamann's writings, upon which he set very great value. But instead of instructing me about these, and making me understand the bias and drift of this extraordinary mind, it generally only served him for an amusement when, in trying to understand these sibylline leaves, I behaved strangely enough. However, I could well feel that something in Hamann's writings appealed to me, and to this I gave myself up, without knowing whence it came and whither it was leading me. After the cure had lasted longer than was reasonable, Lobstein began to hesitate and repeat himself in his treatment, so that the affair would not come to an end ; and Peglow, too, had secretly confided to me that with difficulty could one expect a favourable issue ; so the whole condition became gloomy ; Herder became impatient and ill-humoured, he could not succeed in continuing his activity as heretofore, and he was obliged to restrain himself the more, as they began to lay the blame of the unsuccessful surgical undertaking on Herder's too great mental exertion, and his uninterrupted, animated, nay, merry, intercourse with us. Suffice it to say, that after much trouble and suffering, the artificial tear channel would not form itself, and the communication which was intended would not take place. One saw oneself compelled to let the wound close up so that the evil should not get worse. If, now, during the operation, one could not but admire Herder's firmness under such pains, his melancholy, even fierce resignation to the idea that he must carry such a defect all his life, had about it something sublime, so that he gained for ever the reverence of those who saw and loved him. This disease, which disfigured so notable a countenance, must have been

all the more afflicting for him, as he had become acquainted with an excellent lady<sup>1</sup> in Darmstadt, and had gained her affections. Principally for this cause he may have submitted himself to that cure, in order, on his return, to come more free, more cheerful, more handsome before his half-betrothed, and to unite himself with her more certainly and indissolubly. However, he hastened to get away from Strasburg as soon as possible, and since his stay had hitherto been as expensive as it was unpleasant, I borrowed a sum of money for him, which he promised to make good at an appointed day. The time expired without the money coming. My creditor, indeed, did not dun me, but I was for several weeks in embarrassment. At last a letter came and money, and here he did not act unlike himself; for, instead of thanks and an apology, his letter contained only satirical things in doggerel verse, which would have puzzled or alienated another; but it did not move me at all, for I had conceived so great and powerful an idea of his worth as to absorb everything of an opposite character which could have injured it.

One should, however, never speak, publicly at least, of one's own faults or those of others, unless one hopes to effect some useful purpose thereby; on this account I will here insert certain remarks which force themselves upon me.

Gratitude and ingratitude belong to those events which appear every moment in the moral world, and about which men can never agree among themselves. I am accustomed to make a distinction between unthankfulness, ingratitude, and aversion from gratitude. The first is innate with men, nay, created with them; for it arises from a happy easy-going forgetfulness of the repulsive as of the delightful, by which alone the continuation of life is possible. Man requires such an infinite quantity of previous and concurrent assistances for a tolerable existence, that if he would always pay fitting thanks to the sun, earth, God and Nature, to ancestors and parents, friends and companions, there would be left for him neither time nor feeling to receive and enjoy new benefits. But if the natural man lets this easy-goingness get the control in and over him, then a cold indifference gains more and more the upper hand, and at

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<sup>1</sup> Caroline Flachsland.



last one regards one's benefactor as a stranger to whose injury perhaps anything may be undertaken, provided it be helpful to ourselves. This alone can properly be called ingratitude, which arises from rudeness in which the uncultivated nature must necessarily lose itself at last. Aversions from gratitude, however, the return of a benefit by ill-humoured and sullen conduct is very rare, and occurs only in eminent men, such as, with great natural gifts and a presentiment of them, being born in a lower rank of society or in a helpless condition, must force themselves along from youth upwards step by step, and receive, on all sides, help and support, which is often embittered and repulsive to them owing to the crudity of their benefactors, since that which they receive is earthly, and that which, on the other hand, they give is of a higher kind, so that what can be properly regarded as compensation, is not to be thought of. Lessing, with the fine consciousness of earthly things which fell to his lot in the best years of his life, has in one place expressed himself bluntly but cheerfully about this. Herder, on the other hand, continually embittered the finest days both for himself and others, since that ill-humour, which had necessarily seized him in youth, he knew not how to moderate by strength of mind in later years.

One may well make this demand on oneself ; for to a man's capability of cultivation there comes, with friendly aid, the light of Nature, which is always active in enlightening him about his circumstances ; and generally, in many moral points of culture, one should not regard the failings too severely, and should not look about after the most serious and remote means of correcting them, for certain faults can be easily, nay, playfully, removed. Thus, for instance, by mere habit, we can arouse gratitude in ourselves, keep it alive, and even make it necessary to us. In a biographical essay, it is proper to speak of oneself. By nature I am as little grateful as any man, and by forgetting the benefit received, the violent feeling of a momentary disagreement could very easily lead me astray into ingratitude.

To obviate this, in the first place, I accustomed myself with everything I possessed, to remember with pleasure, how I came by it, from whom I received it, whether it was by way of present, exchange, or purchase, or in any other

way. I have accustomed myself in showing my collections to make mention of the persons by whose means I obtained each particular article, nay, even to do justice to the occasion, to the chance, to the remotest cause and coincidence by which things have become mine, which are dear to me, and which I value. That which surrounds us thereby receives a life ; we see it in a spiritual combination, full of love, reminding us of its origin, and, by making past circumstances present to us, our momentary existence is elevated and enriched ; the originators of the gifts rise repeatedly before the imagination, one connects with their image a pleasing remembrance, it makes ingratitude impossible, and a return on occasions becomes easy and desirable. At the same time, we are led to the consideration of that which is not a possession of the senses, and we love to recapitulate to whom our higher endowments are due, and when they take their date.

Before I turn my attention from that connection with Herder, which for me was so important and rich in consequences, I find yet something to bring forward. Nothing was more natural than that I should gradually become more and more reserved towards Herder in communicating those things which had hitherto contributed to my culture, but particularly such things as still seriously occupied me at the moment. He had destroyed my enjoyment of so much that I had loved before, and had especially blamed me in the strongest manner for the pleasure I took in Ovid's "Metamorphoses." I might defend my favourite as I would, I might say that, for a youthful imagination, nothing could be more delightful than to linger in those cheerful and glorious regions with gods and demigods, and be a witness of their deeds and passions ; I might circumstantially quote that previously mentioned opinion of a sober-minded man, and corroborate it with my own experience, all that was worth nothing ; there was no immediate truth, properly so called, to be found in those poems ; here was neither Greece nor Italy, neither a primitive world nor a cultivated one, everything was rather an imitation of what had already existed and an artificial affected representation, such as could only be expected from an over-cultivated man. And if at last I would maintain that whatever an eminent person produces is also nature, and

that among all nations, ancient and modern, the poet alone has been the maker, so was this not admitted, and I had to endure much on this account, yes, Ovid was almost spoilt for me by this ; for there is no affection, no habit so strong, that it can hold out in the long run against the criticisms of eminent men, in whom one places confidence. Something ~~always~~ cleaves to us, and if one cannot love unconditionally, love is already in a dubious condition.

Most carefully did I conceal from him my interest in certain subjects which had rooted themselves within me, and were little by little moulding themselves into poetic forms. These were "Götz von Berlichingen" and "Faust." The biography of the former had seized my inmost heart. The figure of a rude, well-meaning self-helper, in a wild anarchical time, awakened my deepest sympathy. The significant puppet-show fable of the latter resounded and vibrated many-toned within me. I also had wandered about in all sorts of knowledge, and had early enough been led to see its vanity. I also had in real life tried all sorts of ways, and had always returned more dissatisfied and tormented. Now these things, like many others, I carried about with me, and delighted myself with them in solitary hours, without, however, writing anything down. But most of all I concealed from Herder my mystico-cabalistical chemistry and everything relating to it, though I gladly busied myself with it secretly, in cultivating it more consistently than it had been communicated to me. Of my poetical labours, I think I put before him "Die Mitschuldigen" (The Accomplices), yet I do not remember that any correction or encouragement was given by him. But, with all this, he remained what he was ; whatever proceeded from him had an important, if not a cheerful effect, and even his handwriting exercised a magical power over me. I do not remember to have torn up or thrown away one of his letters, or even an envelope from his hand, yet with so many changes of place and time, not one document of those strange, foreboding, and happy days is left remaining.

That Herder's power of attraction worked upon others as well as on myself, I should scarcely mention, had I not to remark that it extended itself particularly to Jung, called Stilling. The loyal, honest striving of this man must deeply interest every one who had any feeling, and his susceptibility

must have stimulated to frankness anyone who had anything to communicate. Even Herder behaved to him with more forbearance than to the rest of us, for his counter-action always seemed to stand in relation with the action exerted upon him. Jung's narrowness was accompanied by so much goodwill, and his eagerness with so much gentleness and earnestness, that a man of intelligence could certainly not be severe against him, and a benevolent man could not scoff at him or turn him into ridicule. Jung, too, was uplifted to such an extent by Herder that he felt himself strengthened and advanced in all he did ; even his affection towards me seemed to diminish in the same ratio, but we always remained good companions, we made allowances for each other from first to last, and mutually rendered to each other the most friendly services.

Let us, however, withdraw ourselves from the sick chamber of friendship and from the general considerations which point rather to sickness than to health of mind ; let us betake ourselves into the open air, to the lofty and broad platform of the cathedral, as if the time were still present, when we young fellows often appointed an evening to greet the departing sun with brimming goblets. Here all conversation was lost in the contemplation of the country ; then sharpness of eyesight was tested, and every one strove to perceive the most distant objects, nay, plainly to distinguish them. Good telescopes were taken to assist us, and one friend after another pointed out exactly the spot which had become most dear and precious to him ; and I also did not lack such a little spot,<sup>1</sup> which, although it did not stand out prominently in the landscape, nevertheless, attracted me more than all the others with its loving magic. On such occasions the imagination was excited by the narration of our adventures, and many a little expedition was arranged, nay, often undertaken on the spur of the moment, of which I will relate only one in detail instead of a number, as in many respects it was of consequence to me.

With two worthy friends and fellow-boarders, Engelbach and Weyland,<sup>2</sup> both natives of Lower Alsace, I betook myself on horseback to Zabern, where in fine weather the

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<sup>1</sup> Sesenheim is here meant.

<sup>2</sup> 1750-85. Practised as a physician in Frankfort.

friendly little place smiled pleasantly upon us. The sight of the bishop's palace excited our admiration ; the extent, size, and splendour of a new set of stables bore witness to the other comforts of the owner. The magnificence of the staircase astonished us, the chambers and saloons we trod with reverence, only the person of the Cardinal, a little wreck of a man, whom we saw at table, made a contrast. The view into the garden is splendid, and a canal, three miles long, directed straight as a line to the middle of the castle, gives a high conception of the taste and resource of the former owners. We wandered therein up and down, and enjoyed many parts of this beautiful expanse, situated on the borders of the magnificent plain of Alsace, at the foot of the Vosges.

After we had enjoyed ourselves at this clerical outpost of a royal power, and had made ourselves comfortable in its neighbourhood, we arrived early next morning at a public work, which most worthily opens the entrance into a mighty kingdom. Illumined by the rising sun there rose in front of us the famous Zabern-Stairs, a work of incredible labour. A road, built serpent-wise over the most fearful crags, wide enough for three carriages, almost leads uphill so gently that one scarcely notices it. The hardness and smoothness of the way, the flattened elevations on both sides for the foot-passengers, the stone gutters to lead off the mountain water, all are so neatly, artistically, and durably executed, that they offer a delightful view. Thus one gradually arrives at Pfalzburg, a modern fortification. It lies upon a moderate-sized hill, the works are elegantly built on blackish rocks and of the same stone, the joinings pointed out with white lime, show exactly the size of the squared stones, and give a striking proof of neat workmanship. We found the place itself, as is proper for a fortress, regular, built of stone, the church in good taste. When we wandered through the streets—it was nine o'clock on Sunday morning—we heard music ; they were already waltzing in the tavern to their heart's content, and as the inhabitants did not suffer themselves to be disturbed in their pleasures, by the great scarcity, nay, by the threatening famine, so our youthful cheerfulness was in no way disturbed when the baker on the road refused us some bread, and directed us to the tavern, where we might at any rate consume food on the spot.

We now willingly rode down the Zabern-Stairs again to gaze at this architectural miracle a second time, and to enjoy once more the refreshing prospect over Alsace. We soon arrived at Buchsweiler, where friend Weyland had prepared a good reception for us. To a fresh, youthful mind the condition of a small town is most suited ; the family connections are closer and more perceptible ; household matters which, with moderate activity, vary now and then between light official duties, town business, agriculture, and gardening, invite us to a friendly participation ; sociability is necessary, and the stranger finds himself very pleasantly situated in the limited circles, if the disputes of the inhabitants, which in such places make themselves more easily felt, do not affect him. This little town was the capital of the county of Hanau-Lichtenburg, belonging to the Landgrave of Darmstadt, under French sovereignty. A government and chamber established here made the place an important centre point of a very beautiful and desirable principality. We easily forgot the uneven streets, the irregular architecture of the place, when we went out to look at the old castle and the old gardens excellently laid out on a hill. Many little shrubberies, a preserve for tame and wild pheasants, and the relics of many similar arrangements, showed how pleasant this little residence must formerly have been.

Yet the sight of all this was surpassed by the view when, from the neighbouring Baschburg, one looked over the perfectly paradise-like region. This height wholly heaped together from different shells made me for the first time attentive to such documents of antiquity ; I had never before seen them together in so great a mass, yet the curious eye soon turned itself exclusively to the landscape. You stand on the last mountain promontory pointing towards the land,<sup>1</sup> northwards lies a fruitful plain, interspersed with little woods and bounded by a stern chain of mountains, which stretches westwards to Zabern, where one can plainly recognise the Episcopal palace and the Abbey of St John, lying four miles beyond it. From thence the eye follows the ever-vanishing chain of the Vosges towards the south. If you turn to the north-east, you see the castle of Lichten-

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<sup>1</sup> Germany.

burg on a rock, and towards the south-east the eye has the boundless plain of Alsace to investigate, which withdraws itself from the sight in the increasingly misty landscape, until at last the Swabian mountains melt away like shadows into the horizon.

Already in my few wanderings through the world I had noticed how important it is in travelling to inform oneself about the course of the waters, even to ask, with regard to the smallest brook, whither it actually runs. One thus acquires a survey of every land of streams in which one happens to be, a conception of the heights and depths which bear relation to each other, and by these clues, which assist contemplation as well as the memory, one extricates oneself most surely from the geological and political labyrinth. With this observation, I took a solemn farewell of my dear Alsace, as the next morning we intended to turn towards Lorraine. The evening passed away in familiar conversation, in which we tried to cheer ourselves up under a joyless present by the memory of a better past. Here, as in the whole of the small country, the name of the last Count Reinhard of Hanau was blessed above all others, his great understanding and aptitude appeared in all his actions, and many a beautiful memorial of his existence yet remained. Such men have the advantage of being double benefactors ; once to the present, which they make happy, and then to the future, the feeling and courage of which they nourish and sustain.

Now, as we turned north-westwards to the mountains, went past Lützelstein, an old mountain castle in a very hilly country, and descended into the region of the Saar and Moselle, the heavens began to lower, as if they would render yet more sensible to us the condition of the more rugged western country. The valley of the Saar, where we first found Bockenheim, a small place, and opposite to it Neusaarwerden, which is well built, with a country seat bordered on both sides by mountains which might be called melancholy if at their foot an endless succession of meadows and fields, called the Huhnau, did not extend as far as Saarlbe and beyond it, farther than the eye could reach. Great buildings, belonging to the former stud of the Duke of Lorraine, here attract the eye ; they serve at present for a dairy, for which purpose indeed they are very well

situated. We passed over Saargemünd to Saarbrück, and this little residence was a bright point in a land so rocky and woody. The town, small and hilly, but well adorned by the last prince, makes at once a pleasing impression, as the houses are all painted greyish white, and their different heights afford a very variegated view. In the middle of a beautiful square, surrounded with handsome buildings, stands the Lutheran church, on a small scale, but in a proportion corresponding with the whole. The front side of the castle lies on the same level with the town; the back, on the contrary, on the declivity of a steep rock. This has not only been worked out terrace-fashion so as to afford easy access to the valley, but an oblong garden plot has also been obtained below, by turning off the stream on one side and cutting away the rock on the other, after which this whole space was first filled with earth and planted. The time of this undertaking fell in the epoch when they called the architect into consultation about the laying out of gardens, as at present they call in the aid of the landscape painter's eye. The whole arrangement of the castle, the costly and agreeable, the rich and the ornamented, betokened an owner who enjoyed life, as the deceased prince had done; the present one was not there. President von Günderode received us in the most obliging manner, and entertained us for three days better than we had a right to expect. I made use of the various acquaintances which we formed to instruct myself in many ways. The life of the former prince, rich in pleasure, gave material enough for conversation, not less the various arrangements which he hit upon in order to make use of the advantages offered to him by the nature of his land. Here I was now properly initiated into the interest for mountain regions, and the love for those economic and technical investigations, which have occupied me a great part of my life, was first awakened in me. We heard of the rich coal pits at Dutweil, of the iron and alum works, and even of a burning mountain, and we prepared ourselves to look upon these wonders nearer at hand.

We now passed through woody mountains, which to him who comes out of a magnificent, fertile land must seem wild and melancholy, and which can only attract us by the internal contents of its bosom. We were made acquainted



with one simple and one complicated piece of machinery within a short distance of each other, with a scythe smithy and a wire drawing factory. If one is pleased at the former because it supplies the place of common hands, one cannot sufficiently admire the latter, for it works in a higher organic sense, from which understanding and consciousness can scarcely be separated. In the Alsace works we made accurate inquiries after the production and purification of this so necessary material, and when we saw great heaps of a white, greasy, loose earthy matter, and asked the use of it, the workmen announced, smiling, that it was the scum which was thrown up on boiling the alum, and that Herr Stauf had it collected, because he hoped perchance to make some profit out of it. "Is Herr Stauf still alive?" exclaimed my companion in surprise. They answered in the affirmative, and assured us that, according to the plan of our journey, we should pass not far from his lonely dwelling.

Our way now led up along the channels by which the alum water is conducted down and past the principal galleries, which they call *landgrube*, and from which the famous Dutweil coals are procured. When they are dry they have the blue colour of a doubly annealed steel, and the most beautiful succession of rainbow tints plays over the surface with every movement. The dark coal pits, however, attracted us so much the less, as the contents of the same lay richly poured out around us. Now we reached the open mines, in which the roasted alum scales were washed in lye, and soon after a strange occurrence surprised us, though we were prepared for it. We entered into a ravine, and found ourselves in the region of the burning mountain. A strong smell of sulphur surrounded us; one side of the cavity was almost red hot, covered with reddish stone burnt white; a thick vapour rose from the crevices, and we felt the heat of the ground through our strong soles. So accidental an event, for it is not known how the place became ignited, affords a great advantage for the manufacture of alum, since the slates, of which the surface of the mountain consists, lie there completely roasted, and may be steeped in lye in a short time and very well. The whole chasm had arisen in that one had gradually removed and used up the calcined scales. We clambered up out of this depth and were on the top of the mountain. A pleasing beech wood

encircled the place, which followed up to the chasm and extended on both sides of it. Many trees stood already dried up, some were withering near others which, still quite fresh, felt no presentiments of that heat which was approaching their roots in a threatening way.

Upon this space different openings were steaming, others had already finished smoking, and so this fire had smouldered already for ten years through old broken-up pits and shafts, with which the mountain is undermined. It may have penetrated to the clefts through new coal beds, for, some hundred paces farther into the wood, they had thought of following up important signs of productive coal, but they had not got far before a strong vapour burst out against the labourers and dispersed them. The opening was again filled up, but we found the place still smoking as we pursued our way past it to the residence of our hermit-like chemist. This lies between mountains and woods; the valleys there take very various and pleasing windings, the soil round about is black and of the nature of coal, and strata of it frequently came in sight. A coal philosopher—*philosophus per ignem*—as they said formerly, could scarcely have settled himself more suitably.

We came in front of a small house, not inconvenient for a dwelling-place, and found Herr Stauf, who at once recognised my friend and received him with lamentations about the new government. Indeed, we could notice from what he said that alum works, as well as many other well-intended establishments, on account, perhaps, of external and internal circumstances, did not pay their expenses, with much else of the sort. He belonged to the chemists of that time, who, with an inner feeling of all that could be done with the products of Nature, took delight in abstruse investigations of details and secondary matters, and with insufficient knowledge did not understand how to do skilfully enough that from which properly economical and mercantile profit is to be derived. Thus the use which he promised himself from that scum lay very far in the distance; thus he had nothing to show but a cake of sal ammoniac, with which the burning mountain had supplied him. Ready and glad to communicate his complaints to a human ear, the lean decrepit little man, with a shoe on one foot and a slipper on the other, with stockings hanging down and

repeatedly pulled up in vain, dragged himself up the mountain to where the resin-house stands, which he himself had erected and now with great grief sees falling to ruin. Here was found a continuous row of furnaces, where coal was to be cleaned of sulphur and made fit for use in iron works, but at the same time they wished to turn the oil and resin to account, nay, they would not even lose the soot, and so all failed together from so many ends in view. During the lifetime of the former prince the business had been carried on as a hobby and in hope ; now they asked for the immediate use, which was not forthcoming.

After we left our adept to his solitude, we hurried—for it was already late—to the glass house in Friedrichsthal, where we, on our way, became acquainted with one of the most important and wonderful activities of human ingenuity.

Nevertheless, almost more than by these important experiences, we young fellows were interested by some pleasant adventures and a surprising firework at nightfall, not far from Neukirch. For as a few nights before, on the banks of the Saar, shining clouds of glow-worms hovered around us between rock and thicket, so now the spark-throwing forges played their sprightly firework towards us. In the depth of the night we came upon the smelting-houses, situated at the bottom of the valley, and were delighted with the strange half-gloom of these wooden sheds, which are but dimly lighted by a little opening in the glowing furnace. The noise of the water and of the bellows driven by it, the fearful whizzing and whistling of the blast of air which, raging into the smelted ore, deafens the ear and confuses the senses, drove us away at last, to turn into Neukirch, which is built up against the mountain.

But, in spite of all the variety and fatigues of the day, I could find no rest here. I left my friend to a happy sleep, and sought the hunting-seat, which lay higher up. It looks out far over mountain and woods, the outlines of which could only be recognised against the clear night sky, but its sides and depths were impenetrable to my sight. This well-preserved building stood as empty as it was lonely ; no guardian, no huntsman, was to be found. I sat before the great glass doors, upon the steps which run round the whole terrace. Here, in the midst of the mountains, over a dark

soil covered with forest, which seemed yet darker contrasted with the clear horizon of a summer night, with the glowing starry vault above me, I sat for a long time by myself on the deserted spot, and thought that I had never felt such solitude. How charmingly therefore was I surprised by the distant sound of a couple of woodland horns, which at once, like the fragrance of balsam, enlivened the peaceful atmosphere. Then there awakened in me the image of a lovely being, which had retired into the background before the motley objects of these travelling days ; it unveiled itself ever more and more, and drove me from my place back to the inn, where I made preparations to set off at the earliest moment.

The return was not utilised as the journey out had been. We arrived through Zweibrücken, which as a fine and notable residence might well have deserved our attention. We cast a glance upon the great, simple castle, on the extensive esplanades, regularly planted with lime trees and well adapted for the training of race-horses, on the large stables and citizens' houses, which the prince had built to be raffled for. All this, as well as the costume and demeanour of the inhabitants, especially of the matrons and maids, indicated a distant connection, and made plainly visible the relation with Paris, from which everything on the other side of the Rhine, for a considerable time, could not withdraw itself. We visited also the ducal wine cellar, situated in front of the city, which was extensive, and provided with large and artistically made barrels. We went farther, and at last found the country as it was in the vicinity of Saarbrück. Between wild and savage mountains are a few villages ; one here gets rid of the habit of looking for corn. We mounted up, by the side of the Hornback, to Bitsch, which lies on the important spot where the waters divide and one part falls into the Saar, the other into the Rhine ; these last were soon to attract us to them. Yet we could not refuse our attention to the little city of Bitsch, which very picturesquely winds around the mountain, nor to the fortress which lies above it. This is partly built on the rocks, partly hewn out of them. The subterranean chambers are particularly remarkable ; here is not only space sufficient for the abode of a number of men and cattle, but one even comes across large vaults for the drilling of troops, a mill,

a chapel, and whatever else could be required underground if the surface were in a state of disturbance.

We now followed the downrushing brooks through Bärenthal. The thick forests on both the heights remain unused. Here trunks of trees lie rotting on each other by thousands, and young shoots spring up without number from ~~their~~ half-mouldered ancestors. Here, in conversation with some companions on foot, came the name of Von Dieterich again to our ears, which we had already often heard honourably mentioned in these forest regions. The activity and cleverness of this man, his wealth, the use and application of the same all seemed in proportion ; he could with justice take delight in the acquisitions which he increased, and enjoy the profits which he rendered secure. The more I saw of the world, the more I took pleasure, apart from the universally famous names, especially also in those who in particular regions were mentioned with reverence and love ; and thus I easily learnt here, by a few questions, that Von Dieterich, earlier than others, had known how to use with success the mountain treasures of iron, coal, and wood, and had worked his way to an ever-growing opulence. Niederbrunn, where we arrived, was a new proof of this. He had purchased this little place from the Count of Leiningen and other part-owners in order to establish important iron works in the neighbourhood.

Here in these baths, already founded by the Romans, floated around me the spirit of antiquity, venerable relics of which, in fragments of bas reliefs and inscriptions, capitals of columns and shafts, shone out strangely towards me, from farm-houses amidst household lumber and furniture.

As we ascended the adjacent Wasenburg also, I did honour to a well-preserved inscription, which discharged a thankful vow to Mercury, situated on a great mass of rock which forms the base on one side. The castle itself lies on the last mountain looking from Bitsch towards Germany. It is the ruin of a German castle built on Roman remains. From the tower the whole of Alsace was again surveyed, and the conspicuous spire of the cathedral pointed out the situation of Strasburg. Close by, however, the great forest of Hagenau extended itself, and the towers of this town stood out plainly from behind. I was attracted thither. We rode through Reichshofen, where Von Dieterich had

built an important castle, and after we had contemplated from the hills near Niedermoder the pleasing course of the little river Moder, by the forest of Hagenau, I left my friend on a ridiculous coal-mine visit of inspection, which, at Dutweil, might indeed have been a somewhat more serious affair, and rode through Hagenau on the direct road—which my affection already indicated—to my beloved Sesenheim.

For all those views into a wild mountain region and then again into a cheerful, fruitful, joyous land, could not rivet my inward eye, which was directed to a lovable, attractive object. This time also the way hither appeared to me more charming than the opposite, because it brought me again into the neighbourhood of a lady to whom I was heartily devoted, and who deserved as much respect as love. Let me, however, be permitted, before I lead my friends to her rural retreat, to mention a circumstance which contributed very much to enliven and enhance my affection, and the satisfaction which it afforded me.

How far I must have been behind in modern literature one may conclude from the kind of life which I led at Frankfurt, from the studies to which I had devoted myself; nor could my residence in Strasburg advance me in this respect. Now came Herder, and together with his great knowledge brought many other aids and the newer publications as well. Among these he announced to us “The Vicar of Wakefield”<sup>1</sup> as an excellent work, with the German translation of which he wished to make us acquainted by reading it aloud to us himself.

His way of reading was quite peculiar, whoever has heard him preach will be able to form an idea of it. He delivered everything, and also this novel, in a serious and simple style, completely removed from all dramatically imitative representation; he even avoided that variety which is not only permitted but even required in an epic delivery—a slight change of tone when different persons speak, by which what each one says is brought into relief, and the actor is distinguished from the narrative. Without being monotonous, Herder let everything go on in the same tone, as if there were nothing present to him, but all was

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<sup>1</sup> Appeared in 1766. The first German translation was published a few years later.

only historical ; as if the shadows of this poetical creation did not act livingly before him, but only glided gently by. Yet this manner of delivery from his mouth had an infinite charm ; for as he felt all most deeply, and knew how to estimate highly the variety of such a work, so the whole merit of a production appeared purely and the more clearly, as one was not disturbed by details sharply spoken out, nor interrupted in the feeling which the whole was meant to produce.

A Protestant country clergyman is, perhaps, the most beautiful subject of a modern idyl ; he appears, like Melchizedek, a priest and a king in one person. To the most innocent situation which can be imagined on earth, to that of husbandman, he is for the most part united by similarity of occupation, as well as by family relationships ; he is a father, master of a family, an agriculturist, and thus fully a member of the community. On this pure, beautiful, earthly foundation rests his higher calling ; to him is it given to guide men into life, to take care of their spiritual education, to bless them at all the leading epochs of their existence, to instruct, to strengthen, to console them, and, if consolation for the present is not sufficient, to call up and guarantee the hope of a happier future. Imagine such a man with pure human sentiments, strong enough not to deviate from them under any circumstances, and by this already elevated above the multitude, of whom one cannot expect purity and firmness ; grant him the learning necessary to his office, as well as cheerful, equable activity, which is even passionate, as it neglects no moment to do good, and you will have him well endowed. But at the same time one must add the necessary limitation, that he must not only remain in a small circle, but may also pass over to a smaller ; grant him good nature, placability, steadfastness, and everything else praiseworthy which springs from a decided character, and over all this a cheerful and smiling toleration of his own and others' failings, so you will have pretty well put together the picture of our excellent Wakefield.

The delineation of this character in his course of life through joys and sorrows, the ever-increasing interest of the story by the combination of the entirely natural with the strange and singular, makes this novel one of the best which has ever been written ; besides this, it has the great advantage

that it is quite moral, nay, in a pure sense, Christian : represents the reward of a good will and perseverance in the right, strengthens an unconditional confidence in God, and attests the final triumph of good over evil—and all this without a trace of cant or pedantry. From both of these the author was preserved by an elevation of mind which shows itself throughout in the form of irony, by which this little work must appear to us as wise as it is pleasing. The author, Dr Goldsmith, without question, has great insight into the moral world, into its strength and its weakness, but at the same time he can thankfully acknowledge that he is an Englishman, and reckon highly the advantages which his country and his nation afford him. The family, with the description of which he is occupied, stands upon one of the lowest steps of citizen comfort, and yet comes in contact with the highest ; its narrow circle, which becomes still more contracted through the natural and civil course of things, touches upon the great world ; this little craft floats upon the rich, agitated waves of English life, and in weal or woe it has to expect injury or help from the vast fleet which sails around it.

I may suppose that my readers know this work and have it in memory ; he who hears it named for the first time here, as well as he who is stirred to read it again, will both thank me. For the former, I remark only in passing that the wife of the Vicar is of that good, active sort, who allows herself and her own to want for nothing, but who is also somewhat vain of herself and her family. Two daughters—Olivia, handsome and more devoted to the outside of things ; Sophia, charming and more given to what is inward : I will not omit to mention an industrious son, Moses, who is somewhat blunt, and emulous of his father.

If Herder could be accused of a fault in his reading aloud, it was impatience ; he did not wait until the hearer had perceived and grasped a certain part of the details so as to be able to feel and think correctly about it ; hastening on, he wished to see the effects at once, and yet he was also displeased with these when they did appear. He blamed the excess of feeling which overflowed from me more and more at every step. I felt like a man, like a young man ; everything for me was living, true, and present. He who only considered the content and the form, saw clearly that I was overpowered



by the subject-matter, and this he would not allow. Then Peglow's reflections, which were not of the most refined, were still worse received ; but he was especially angry at our want of acuteness in not seeing beforehand the contrasts of which the author often makes use, and allowing ourselves to be moved and carried away by them, without noticing the oft-returning artifice. He would not pardon us that we did not see at once, or had at least conjectured at the beginning, where Burchell is on the point of betraying himself, when he passes in his narration from the third to the first person, that he is the lord of whom he is speaking ; and when at last we rejoiced like children at the discovery and the transformation of the poor, miserable wanderer into a rich powerful lord, he immediately recalled the passage which, according to the author's intention, we had missed hearing, and read us a powerful lecture on our stupidity. It will be seen from this that he looked upon the work merely as a production of art, and demanded the same of us, who were yet wandering in those conditions in which it is quite allowable to let works of art affect us like productions of Nature.

I did not suffer myself to be at all perplexed by Herder's invectives ; for young people have the happiness, or unhappiness, that when once anything has produced an effect on them, this effect must be wrought out among themselves—from which much good, as well as much mischief, arises. The above-mentioned work had left a great impression upon me, of which I could not give myself an account ; but, properly speaking, I felt myself in harmony with that ironical tone of mind which elevates itself above every object, above fortune and misfortune, good and evil, life and death, and thus attains to the possession of a truly poetical world. Indeed, I could only become conscious of this later ; enough, it gave me much to do for the moment, but by no means could I have expected to be so soon transposed from this fictitious world into a similar real one.

My fellow-boarder, Weyland, who enlivened his quiet, industrious life, as he was a native of Alsace, by calling on his friends and relations in the neighbourhood from time to time, did me many services on my small excursions, since he introduced me to different localities and families, sometimes in person, sometimes by recommendations. He had

often spoken to me of a country clergyman, who lived at Drusenheim, four and twenty miles from Strasburg, in possession of a good benefice, with a sensible wife and two amiable daughters. The hospitality and agreeableness of this family were always highly extolled. It scarcely needed so much to attract a young knight who had already accustomed himself to pass all his leisure days and hours on horseback in the open air. We decided, therefore, upon this trip, at which my friend was to promise that on introducing me he would say neither good or bad of me, but generally would treat me with indifference, and would even allow me to make my appearance clad, if not badly, yet somewhat poorly and negligently. He agreed to this, and promised himself some sport from it. It is a pardonable whim in important men occasionally to place their exterior advantages in concealment, so as to allow their own inward human nature to operate with greater purity ; for this reason the incognito of princes and the adventures resulting therefrom had always something highly pleasing ; there appear disguised divinities, who can reckon at double its value all the good which is shown to them personally, and are in the position to be able either to make light of the disagreeable or avoid it. That Jupiter should be well pleased in his incognito with Philemon and Baucis and Henry IV. after a hunting party with his peasants is quite in accordance with Nature, and we like it well ; but that a young man without importance or name should take it into his head to derive some pleasure from being incognito, many might interpret as a piece of unpardonable arrogance. But since the question here is not of sentiments and actions, in how far praiseworthy or blameworthy, but how far they can manifest themselves and occur, we will on this occasion, for the sake of our amusement, forgive the young man his conceit, all the more so as I must here allege that from my youth upwards a love for disguising myself had been excited in me even by my serious father.

This time, too, partly by some old clothes of my own, partly by some borrowed garments and by the manner of combing my hair, I had, if not disfigured, at least so strangely dressed myself up that my friend on the way could not help laughing, especially as I knew perfectly how to imitate the bearing and gestures of such figures when they sit on horse-

back and are called "Latin riders."<sup>1</sup> The fine road, the most splendid weather, and the vicinity of the Rhine, put us in the best humour. At Drusenheim we stopped a moment, he to tidy himself up and I to rehearse my part, out of which I was afraid I should fall now and then. The country here has the character of all the open, level Alsace. We rode on a pleasant footpath over the meadows, and soon came to Sesenheim, left our horses at the inn, and walked leisurely to the parsonage. "Don't let yourself be put out," said Weyland, while he showed me the house from afar, "because it looks like an old, miserable farmhouse, it is so much the newer inside." We stepped into the courtyard; the whole pleased me, for it had exactly that which is called picturesque, and that which had such a magic interest for me in Dutch art. The effect which time produces on all human work was strongly visible. House, barn, and stable were just in that condition of decay, at the point where one is undecided and doubtful between preserving and building anew, one neglects the one without being able to attain the other.

All was quiet and deserted, as in the village, so in the courtyard. We found the father, a small man, wrapped up in himself but nevertheless friendly, quite alone, for the family were in the fields. He bade us welcome, and offered us some refreshment, which we declined. My friend hastened to find the ladies, and I remained alone with our host. "You are perhaps surprised," said he, "to find me in a wealthy village and with a lucrative benefice, so miserably quartered; this proceeds from irresolution. Long since it has been promised to me by the parish, and even by those in higher places, that the house shall be rebuilt; many plans have been already made, examined, and altered, none of them altogether rejected and none carried into execution. It has lasted so many years that I scarcely know how to control my impatience." I made such answer as I held to be suitable, to cherish his hopes and to encourage him to pursue the affair more vigorously. Whereupon he proceeded to describe in confidence the persons on whom such matters depended, and, though he was no special delineator of character, I could, nevertheless, easily understand how the whole business must have been delayed.

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<sup>1</sup> Helpless and unskilled scholars.

The confidential manner of the man had something peculiar ; he spoke to me as if he had known me ten years, without there having been anything in his look from which I could conjecture that he directed any attention to me. At last my friend came in with the mother. She seemed to look at me with quite different eyes. Her countenance was regular, and the expression of it intelligent ; she must have been beautiful in her youth. Her figure was tall and slender, yet not more so than became her years, and seen from behind she had quite a youthful and pleasing appearance. The elder daughter then came bursting in briskly ; she asked after Frederica, as both the others had also asked after her. The father assured them that he had not seen her since all three had gone out. The daughter again went out at the door to look for her sister ; the mother brought us some refreshment, and Weyland continued the conversation with the two parents, which referred only to known persons and circumstances, as, indeed, is wont to happen when acquaintances meet after some time, that they make inquiries about the members of a large circle, and mutually give each other information.

The elder daughter again came hastily into the room, uneasy at not having found her sister. They were anxious about her, and blamed her for this or that bad habit ; only the father said, quite quietly : “ Let her alone ; she has already come back.” At this moment she really entered the door, and then indeed a most charming star arose in this rural heaven. Both daughters wore nothing but German, as they used to call it, and this almost obsolete national costume became Frederica particularly well. A short, white, full skirt, with a flounce, not so long but that the neatest little feet were visible up to the ankle ; a tight white bodice and a black taffeta apron : there she stood, on the boundary between country and town girl. Slender and light, she tripped along as if she had nothing to carry, and her neck seemed almost too delicate for the large fair braids on her dainty little head. From cheerful blue eyes she looked very plainly round, and her pretty turned-up nose peered as freely into the air as if there could be no care in the world ; her straw hat hung on her arm, and then, at the first glance, I had the delight of seeing her and acknowledging her at once in all her grace and loveliness.

I now began to act my part with moderation, half-ashamed at hoaxing such good people, whom I had time enough to observe ; for the girls continued the former conversation, and, indeed, with passion and some temper. All the neighbours and relations were again brought forward, and, to my imagination, there appeared to be such a swarm of uncles and aunts, relations, cousins, comers and goers, gossips and guests, that I thought myself lodged in the liveliest world possible. All the members of the family had exchanged some words with me ; the mother looked at me every time she came in or went out, but Frederica first entered into conversation with me, and as I took up and glanced through some music lying about, she asked me if I, too, played. When I answered in the affirmative, she requested me to perform something, but the father would not allow this, for he maintained that it was proper to serve the guest first with some piece of music or a song.

She played several things with some readiness, in the style which one is accustomed to hear in the country, and on a harpsichord, too, that the schoolmaster should have tuned long since, if he had had time. She was now to sing a song also, a certain tender melancholy affair, but she did not succeed in it. She rose up and said, smiling, or rather with that touch of serene joy which ever reposed on her countenance : “ If I sing badly, I cannot lay the blame on the harpsichord and the schoolmaster ; but let us go out of doors, then you shall hear my Alsatian and Swiss songs, they sound much better.”

During supper a notion, which had already struck me, occupied me to such a degree that I became meditative and silent, though the liveliness of the elder sister and the gracefulness of the younger shook me often enough out of my contemplations. My astonishment was beyond all expression at finding myself so actually in the Wakefield family. The father, indeed, could not be compared with that excellent man, but where would you find his like ? On the other hand, all the dignity which is peculiar to that husband, here appeared in the wife. One could not see her without at the same time reverencing and fearing her. In her one observed the fruits of a good education ; her demeanour was quiet, easy, cheerful, and inviting.

If the elder daughter had not the famous beauty of

Olivia, yet she was well made, lively, and rather impetuous ; everywhere she showed herself active, and lent a helping hand to her mother in all things. To put Frederica in the place of Primrose's Sophia was not difficult, for of the latter little is said, it is only taken for granted that she is amiable, and Frederica was so indeed. Now, as the same occupation and the same situation, wherever they occur, produce similar if not the same effects, so here, too, many things came into the conversation, many things happened which had already taken place in the Wakefield family. When at last a younger son, long announced, expected by the father with impatience, sprang into the room and boldly sat himself down by us, taking but little notice of the guests, I could scarcely help exclaiming : " Moses, are you here, too ! "

The conversation at supper extended my insight into this country and family circle, since the talk was about various amusing incidents which occurred, now here, now there. Frederica, who sat by me, then took the occasion to describe to me different localities which it was worth while to visit. As one little story always calls forth another, I was able to mix so much the better in the conversation and relate similar incidents, and as besides this a good country wine was by no means spared, I stood in danger of slipping out of my character ; consequently my prudent friend took the pretext of the beautiful moonshine for proposing a walk, which was at once approved. He offered the eldest his arm and I the youngest, and so we went through the wide fields, paying more attention to the heaven above us than to the earth, which lost itself in the distance around us. There was, however, nothing of moonshine in Frederica's talk ; by the clearness with which she spoke she turned night into day, and there was nothing in it which would have indicated or aroused any feeling, only her expressions related more than hitherto to me, since she represented to me her own situation, as well as the neighbourhood and her acquaintances, just as far as I should be acquainted with them ; for she hoped, she added, that I would make no exception, and would visit them again, as all strangers had willingly done who had once stopped with them.

It was very pleasant for me to listen silently to the description which she gave of the small world in which she moved

and of the persons whom she specially valued. She thereby brought to me a clear and, at the same time, such an agreeable idea of her situation, that it had a very strange effect upon me ; for I felt at once a deep regret that I had not lived with her sooner, and at the same time a truly painful, envious feeling towards all who had the good fortune to be in her society. I watched closely at once, as if I had a right to do so, all her description of men, whether they appeared under the name of neighbours, cousins, or friends, and directed my conjectures now this way, now that, but how could I have discovered anything in my complete ignorance of all the circumstances. She at last became more and more conversational and I more and more silent. It was so pleasant to listen to her, and as I heard only her voice, while the form of her countenance as well as the rest of the world floated in the twilight, it seemed to me as if I could see into her heart, which I could not but find very pure, as it opened itself to me in such unembarrassed loquacity.

When my companion retired with me into the guest-chamber prepared for us he at once, with self-complacency, broke out into pleasant jesting, and took great credit to himself for having surprised me so much with the similarity of the Primrose family. I agreed with him by showing myself thankful. "Truly," he cried, "the story is quite complete. This family may very well be compared, and the gentleman in disguise may do himself the honour of passing for Mr Burchell ; moreover, since scoundrels are not so necessary in ordinary life as in novels, I will for the time undertake the rôle of the nephew, and behave myself better than he did." However, I soon changed the conversation, pleasant as it might be to me, and asked him, before all things on his conscience, if he had really not betrayed me. He assured me "no," and I could believe him. They had rather inquired, said he, after the merry fellow-boarder who dined at the same pension with him in Strasburg, and of whom they had been told all kinds of preposterous stuff. I now went to other questions : Had she been in love ? Was she engaged ? He denied all this. "Truly," said I, "such a natural cheerfulness is to me inconceivable. Had she loved and lost and again recovered herself, or had she been betrothed—in both these cases I could account for it."

Thus we chatted together far into the night, and I was

awake again at dawn. My desire to see her again seemed unconquerable ; but while I was dressing I was appalled at my accursed wardrobe, which I had so light-mindedly selected. The further I advanced in putting on my clothes, the meaner did I appear to myself ; for everything had been calculated for just this effect. My hair I might perchance have got right, but as I at last forced myself into the borrowed, worn-out, grey coat, and the short sleeves gave me the most absurd appearance, I fell more decidedly into despair when I could see myself only piecemeal in a little looking-glass, since then one part always seemed more ridiculous than the other.

During this toilette my friend awoke, and with the contentment of a good conscience and in the feeling of pleasurable hope for the day, looked at me from out of the quilted silk coverlet. I had for a long time already envied his fine clothes as they hung over the chair and, had he been of my size, I would have carried them off before his eyes, changed my dress outside, and, hurrying into the garden, left behind my accursed disguise for him ; he would have been good-humoured enough to put himself into my clothes, and the tale would have come to an amusing end early in the morning. But that was not to be thought of, no more was any other suitable adjustment. In the figure in which my friend could give me out as an industrious and clever but poor theological student, to appear again before Frederica, who the previous evening had spoken in so friendly a way to my disguised self, that was for me quite impossible. Annoyed and wrapt in thought, there I stood, and called up all my power of invention ; but it deserted me. But now, when my friend, comfortably stretched out, after he had fixed his eyes on me for a while, broke at once into loud laughter, and exclaimed : “ No ! It is true ; you do look quite awful ! ” I replied impetuously : “ And I know what I’ll do ; good-bye, and make my excuses ! ” “ Are you mad ? ” he cried, as he jumped out of bed and wanted to detain me. But I was already out of the door, down the stairs, out of the house and courtyard, off to the tavern ; my horse was saddled in an instant, and I hurried away in mad vexation, galloping towards Drusenheim, through that place, and still farther on.

When I now thought I was in safety, I rode more slowly,



and now felt how absolutely against my will I had gone away. But I resigned myself to my fate, called up to mind the walk of the previous evening with the greatest calm, and cherished the secret hope of soon seeing her again. But this quiet feeling soon changed itself again into impatience, and I now determined to ride quickly into the town, change my dress, and get a fresh horse, since then, as my passion represented it to me, I could certainly return before dinner, or more probably to dessert or towards evening, and ask for forgiveness.

I was just going to put spurs to my horse to carry out the plan when another and, as it seemed to me, very happy thought, passed through my mind. Already, yesterday, at the tavern in Drusenheim, I had noticed a son of the landlord very neatly dressed, who also early this morning, being busy with his country affairs, had saluted me from his courtyard. He was of my figure, and had for the moment reminded me of myself. No sooner thought than done ! My horse was hardly turned round when I found myself at Drusenheim. I brought him into the stable, and made the fellow my proposal in a few words : he should lend me his clothes, as I had some joke on foot at Sesenheim. I did not have to talk long ; he was delighted with the proposition, and applauded me for wishing to make some sport for the mademoiselles : they were such excellent people, especially Mademoiselle Riekchen ; and the parents, too, liked to see everything go on merrily and pleasantly. He considered me attentively, and as from my get-up he might have taken me for a poor wretch, he said : " If you wish to insinuate yourself, this is the right way." We had already got far in our changing of clothes, and, properly speaking, he should not have trusted me with his holiday clothes on the strength of mine, but he was honest-hearted, and besides, had my horse in his stable. I soon stood there smart enough, puffed out my chest, and my friend seemed to regard his counterpart with complacency. " Topp,<sup>1</sup> Mr Brother ! " said he, reaching me his hand, which I grasped heartily ; " don't come too near my girl, she might make a mistake ! "

My hair, which now had its full growth again, I could part more or less like his, and, as I looked at him repeatedly,

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<sup>1</sup> An expression used in making a bargain.

I found it amusing to imitate moderately his thicker eyebrows with a burnt cork and bring them nearer together in the middle, so that with my enigmatical intention I might make myself also externally into a riddle. "Now have you not," said I, as he handed me his beribboned hat, "something or other to be done at the Vicarage, that I might announce myself there in a natural manner?" "Good," replied he, "but then you must wait a couple of hours more. There is a woman confined at our house; I will offer to bring the cake to the parson's wife, and you may carry it over. Pride must pay its penalty and so must the joke." I decided to wait, but these two hours were infinitely long, and I was dying of impatience when the third hour passed before the cake came out of the oven. At last I received it quite hot, and hastened away with my credentials in the most beautiful sunshine, accompanied for a bit by my counterpart, who promised to come after me towards evening and bring me my clothes, which, however, I gaily declined, and stipulated to deliver up his to him again. I had not skipped far with my present, which I carried in a neat, tied-up napkin, when in the distance I saw my friend coming to meet me, with the two ladies. My heart was oppressed, which was certainly not suitable under the jacket. I stopped still, took breath, and tried to consider how I should begin; and now I first noticed that the ground was very much in my favour, for they were walking on the other side of the brook, which, as well as the strips of meadow through which it ran, kept the two footpaths fairly apart from each other. When they were just opposite me, Frederica, who had already perceived me long before, cried: "George, what are you bringing there?" I was clever enough to cover my face with my hat, which I took off, while I held high up in the air the loaded napkin. "A christening cake!" cried she. "How is your sister?" "Well," said I, while I tried to speak, if not Alsatian, at least in a strange dialect. "Take it home," said the elder daughter, "and if you don't find my mother give it to the maid; but wait for us, we shall soon be back—do you hear?" I hastened along my path in the joyful feeling of the best hope that all would go off well, as the beginning had been so fortunate, and I had soon reached the parsonage. I found nobody in the house nor in the kitchen; I did not wish to disturb the

gentleman, whom I might suppose to be occupied in the study. I therefore sat down on the bench before the door, with the cake beside me, and pressed my hat upon my face.

I cannot easily recall a pleasanter sensation. Here on the threshold to sit again, over which a short time before I had blundered out in despair ; already to have seen her again, already to have heard again her dear voice, so soon after my vexation had pictured to me a long separation, every moment to be expecting herself and a discovery, at which my heart throbbed, and yet in this ambiguous case a discovery without shame ; for at the very beginning it was a more amusing prank than any of those over which we had laughed yesterday. Love and necessity are the best masters, here they both worked together, and their pupil did not remain unworthy of them.

But the maid came stepping out of the barn. " Now, have the cakes turned out well ? " cried she to me : " How is your sister ? " " All right," said I, and pointed to the cake without looking up. She took up the napkin and muttered : " Now, what's the matter with you to-day ? Has little Barbara been looking again at some one else ? Don't let us suffer for that. It will make a nice marriage if you go on so ! " As she spoke rather loud, the vicar came to the window and asked what was the matter. She showed him to me : I stood up, turned to him, but still kept the hat over my face. When he had spoken in a somewhat friendly way and asked me to remain, I went to the garden, and was just going in when the vicar's wife, who was entering the courtyard gate, called out to me. As the sun shone straight in my face, I once more availed myself of the advantage which my hat afforded me, and greeted her by an awkward bow ; but she went into the house after she had spoken to me, and said that I was not to go away without having had something to eat. I now walked up and down the garden. Up till now everything had had the best success, yet I drew a deep breath when I reflected that the young people would soon now return. But, unexpectedly, the mother stepped up to me, and was going to ask a question, when she looked into my face, which I could no longer conceal, and the words stuck in her throat. " I am looking for George," she said, after a pause, " and whom do I find ? Is it you, young sir ? How many forms have

you, then?" "In earnest, only one," said I; "but for fun as many as you like." "Which I will not spoil," smiled she. "Go out behind the garden into the meadow till it strikes twelve; then come back and I shall already have managed the joke." I did so, but when I was beyond the hedges of the village gardens and was going along the meadows, some country people came towards me along the footpath and put me in some embarrassment. I therefore turned aside into a little wood, which crowned an elevation quite near, in order to hide myself thus till the appointed time. Yet how strangely did I feel when I entered it, for there appeared before me a neat place with seats, from each of which there was a pretty view of the neighbourhood. Here was the village and church tower; here Drusenheim, and behind it the woody islands of the Rhine; opposite, the mountain ranges of the Vosges; and, finally, the Strasburg cathedral. These various pictures, bright as heaven, were set in bushy frames, so that one could see nothing more delightful and pleasing. I sat down on one of the seats, and noticed on the largest tree a small board with the inscription "Frederica's Rest." It never occurred to me that I might have come to disturb this rest, for a budding passion has this beauty about it, that as it is unconscious of its origin, neither can it have any thought of an end, and while it feels glad and cheerful, has no presentiment that it may also create harm.

Scarcely had I had time to look about me, and was losing myself in sweet reveries, when I heard some one coming; it was Frederica herself. "George, what are you doing here?" she cried from a distance. "Not George," I cried, as I ran to meet her, "but one who asks your pardon a thousand times." She looked at me with astonishment, but quickly collected herself, and said, after drawing a deep breath: "You dreadful man, how you frighten me." "The first disguise has led me into the second," I exclaimed; "the former would have been unpardonable if I had only known to some extent to whom I was going, this one you will certainly forgive, for it is the form of people whom you treat kindly." Her pale cheek was coloured with the most beautiful rose-red. "You shall not be worse off than George, at any rate! But let us sit down. I confess the fright has gone into my limbs." I sat beside her,

greatly moved. "We know all, through your friend, up to this morning," said she. "Now tell me the rest." I did not let her say this twice, but described to her my horror at my figure of yesterday—my rushing out of the house so comically—that she laughed heartily and graciously; then I went on with what followed, with all modesty, indeed, yet passionately enough, so that it might have passed for a declaration of love in historical form. My pleasure at finding her again I solemnised at last with a kiss upon her hand, which she allowed to remain in mine. If she had taken upon herself the expense of the conversation during yesterday's moonlight walk I now, on my side, richly repaid the debt. The pleasure of seeing her again, and of being able to tell her everything which I had kept back yesterday, was so great that, in my eloquence, I did not notice how meditative and silent she was. She drew a deep breath several times, and again and again I asked her forgiveness for the fright I had caused her. I don't know how long we may have sat, but suddenly we heard some one call "Riekchen, Riekchen." It was the voice of her sister. "That will be a pretty story," said the dear girl, restored again to her complete cheerfulness. "She is coming hither on my side," added she, while she bent herself so as half to conceal me; "turn yourself away so that you may not be recognised at once." The sister entered the place, but not alone; Weyland was with her, and both when they saw us remained as if petrified.

If we should all at once see a flame burst out violently from a peaceful roof, or should meet a monster whose deformity was at once revolting and fearful, we should not be struck with such a fierce horror as that which seizes us when we see something unexpectedly with our own eyes which we had believed morally impossible. "What is this?" cried the elder sister, with the rapidity of one who is frightened. "What is this? You with George, hand-in-hand! How am I to understand this." "Dear sister," replied Frederica, very doubtfully, "the poor fellow, he is begging something of me; he has something also to beg from you, but you must forgive him beforehand." "I don't understand, I do not comprehend," said the sister, while she shook her head and looked at Weyland, who, in his quiet way, stood by in complete tranquillity, and regarded the scene without any

sort of expression. Frederica got up and drew me after her. "No hesitation," cried she; "pardon begged and pardon granted." "Now, please," said I, as I came pretty near the elder one, "I have need of pardon." She drew back, gave a loud shriek, and was covered with blushes; then she threw herself on the grass, laughed noisily, and seemed as if she would never have done. Weyland smiled pleasantly, and cried: "You are a wonderful youth!" Then he shook my hand in his. He was not usually very liberal with his caresses, but his shake of the hand had something hearty and enlivening about it, yet he was sparing of this also.

After somewhat recovering and collecting ourselves, we set out on our return to the village. On the way I learned how this singular meeting had been occasioned. Frederica had at last separated herself from the promenaders to rest herself in her little nook a moment before dinner, and when the other two had got to the house, the mother sent them off to fetch Frederica as quickly as possible, because the dinner was ready.

The elder sister showed the most extravagant good humour, and when she learnt that their mother had already discovered the secret, she cried out: "Now it is still left for us to deceive the father, brother, the servant man and maid." When we were at the garden hedge, Frederica insisted on going first into the house with my friend. The maid was busy in the kitchen garden, and Olivia (so let the elder sister be named here) called out to her: "Stop, I have something to tell you!" She left me standing by the hedge and went to the maid. I saw that they spoke very seriously. Olivia represented to her that George had quarrelled with Barbara and seemed desirous of marrying her. The girl was not displeased at this; I was now called, and was to confirm what had been said. The pretty, uncouth child cast down her eyes, and remained so until I stood quite close in front of her. But when, all at once, she perceived the strange face, she, too, gave a loud scream and ran away. Olivia bade me run after her and hold her fast, so that she should not get into the house and make a noise, as she herself wished to go and see how things were with her father. On the way, Olivia met the servant-boy, who was in love with the maid; meantime I had hurried after the maid and held her fast. "Only think what good

luck," cried Olivia ; " it's all over with Barbara, and George marries Liese." " That I have thought for a long while," said the good fellow, and remained standing in an ill-humour.

I had given the maid to understand that all we had to do was to deceive the father. We went up to the lad, who turned round and tried to withdraw ; but Liese brought him back, and he, too, when he was undeceived, made the most extraordinary gestures. We went together to the house. The table was laid, and the father was already in the room. Olivia, who left me behind her, stepped to the threshold, and said : " Father, do you object to George dining with us to-day ? But you must allow him to keep his hat on." " As far as I am concerned . . . " said the old man ; " but why such an unusual thing ? Has he hurt himself ? " She led me forward, as I stood with my hat on. " No," said she, leading me into the room, " but he has a breeding-cage under it, and the birds might fly out and make the devil of a noise, for they are nothing but wild ones." The father was pleased with the joke, without knowing precisely what it meant. At this instant she took off my hat, made an awkward bow, and required me to do the same. The old man looked at me, recognised me, but was not put out of his priestly self-possession. " Aye, aye, Mr Candidate," exclaimed he, while he raised a threatening finger, " you have changed your opinions very quickly, and in the night I have lost an assistant who yesterday promised me so faithfully that he would often mount my pulpit for me on weekdays." Thereat he laughed heartily, bade me welcome, and we sat down to table. Moses came much later ; for, as the youngest spoiled child, he had accustomed himself not to hear the dinner-bell. Besides, he took very little notice of the company, scarcely even when he contradicted them. In order to be more sure of him, they had placed me, not between the sisters, but at the end of the table, where George often used to sit. As he came in at the door behind me, he slapped me smartly on the shoulder, and said : " A good dinner to you, George." " Many thanks, squire," replied I. The strange voice and the strange face startled him. " What say you," cried Olivia ; " doesn't he look quite like his brother ? " " Yes, from behind, like all folks," replied Moses, who managed to recover his composure immediately. He did not look at me again, and only busied himself with

zealously devouring the dishes to make up for lost time. Then, too, it pleased him to rise at times, and to find something to do in the yard and the garden. At the dessert the real George came in, and enlivened the whole scene still more. They wanted to rally him for his jealousy, and would not praise him for getting rid of a rival in me; but he was modest and clever enough, and in a half-confused manner mixed up himself, his sweetheart, his counterpart, and the mademoiselles with each other to such a degree that at last no one knew of whom he was talking, and they were glad to let him consume in peace a glass of wine and a bit of his own cake.

After dinner there was some talk of going for a walk, which, however, did not suit me well in my peasant's clothes. But the ladies, early on that day already, when they learned who had run away in such a hurry, had remembered that a fine hunting-coat of a cousin of theirs hung in the cupboard, in which, when there, he used to go hunting. But I refused it; outwardly, indeed, with various jokes, but inwardly with a feeling of vanity, not wishing as the cousin to destroy the good impression I had made as the peasant. The father had withdrawn to have his midday nap, the mother was, as always, busy with the housekeeping. But my friend made the proposal that I should tell them some story, to which I immediately agreed. We betook ourselves into a spacious arbour, and I told them a tale which I have since written out under the title of "The New Melusina."<sup>1</sup> It bears about the same relation to "The New Paris" as the youth bears to the boy, and I would insert it here if I were not afraid of injuring, by strange plays of fancy, the rural reality and simplicity which here agreeably surround us. Suffice it to say, I succeeded in gaining the reward of the inventor and narrator of such productions, namely, by arousing the curiosity, in riveting the attention, in provoking over-hasty solutions of impenetrable riddles, in deceiving expectation, in causing perplexity by means of the more wonderful taking the place of the wonderful, by arousing pity and fear, in causing anxiety, in stirring the emotions, and at last, by the change of what was apparently earnest into an ingenious and cheerful jest, in satisfying the mind and

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<sup>1</sup> In "Wilhelm Meister, Wanderjahre."



leaving behind for the imagination materials for new images, and for the understanding materials for further reflection.

Should anyone in the future read this tale in print and doubt whether it could have produced such an effect, let him remember that, properly speaking, man is only called upon to act in the present. Writing is an abuse of speech, reading silently to oneself is a pitiful substitute for speech. Man effects all he can upon man by his personality, youth is most powerful upon youth, and hence arise also the purest influences. These are they which enliven the world and allow it to perish neither physically nor morally. From my father I had inherited a certain didactic loquacity, from my mother the gift of representing rightly and forcibly everything that the imagination can produce or grasp, of giving freshness to known stories, of inventing and relating others, nay, of inventing in the course of narration. By my paternal endowment I was, for the most part, boring to the company ; for who likes to hear the opinions and sentiments of another, especially of a youth whose judgment, from want of experience, always appears insufficient. My mother, on the other hand, had thoroughly qualified me for social intercourse. The emptiest tale has in itself a high charm for the imagination, and the smallest amount of sound matter is thankfully received by the understanding.

By such performances, which cost me nothing, I made myself beloved by children, excited and delighted youth, and drew the attention of older people to me. But in society, such as it usually is, I was soon obliged to discontinue these exercises, and I have thereby lost too much of the enjoyment of life and of free mental development ; yet both these parental gifts accompanied me throughout my whole life, united with a third, namely, the necessity of expressing myself figuratively and symbolically. In consideration of these peculiarities, which the acute and clever Dr Gall<sup>1</sup> discovered in me according to his theory, he assured me that I was really a born popular orator. At this disclosure I was not a little alarmed, for if it had been well founded, everything else which I undertook would alas have been a failure, seeing that with my nation there was nothing to make speeches about.

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<sup>1</sup> Goethe made the acquaintance of Dr Gall in 1805.

## BOOK XI

*"Care is taken that the trees do not grow into the sky."*

AFTER I had, in that arbour at Sesenheim, finished my tale,<sup>1</sup> in which the ordinary and impossible so gracefully alternated, I saw that my hearers, who had already shown themselves most sympathetic, were in the highest degree enchanted by my strange narrative. They urged me insistently to write down the story for them, so that they could often repeat it by reading it aloud among themselves and with others. I promised the more willingly, as I hoped to gain a pretext for repeating my visit and an opportunity for making a nearer acquaintance. The company separated for a moment, and all were disposed to feel that after a day spent in so lively a manner the evening might be somewhat flat. From this anxiety I was freed by my friend, who asked leave for us to depart at once, because he, as an industrious academic citizen, regular in his studies, wished to pass the night at Drusenheim, and to be at Strasburg early the next day.

We both reached our night-quarters in silence: I, because I felt a pang in my heart, which drew me back; he, because he had something else on his mind, which he communicated to me as soon as we arrived. "It is strange," he began, "that you just hit upon this story. Didn't you notice that it made quite a peculiar impression?" "Indeed," I replied, "how could I have failed to notice that the elder one laughed at certain passages more than was reasonable, that the younger one shook her head, that you looked at each other significantly, and that you yourself were nearly put out of countenance. I don't deny, I felt myself rather confused, for it passed through my mind that it was perhaps unsuitable to relate to the dear girls such

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<sup>1</sup> "The New Melusina."

silly tales, of which they had better remain ignorant, and give them such a bad conception of men as they must necessarily have formed from the figure of the hero." "Not at all," replied he, "you have not guessed it; and how should you do so? These dear girls are not so unacquainted with such things as you imagine, for the great society around them gives them occasion for many a reflection; and there is, on the other side of the Rhine, just such a married pair as you describe, only in a rather exaggerated and fanciful way: the husband just as tall, sturdy, and awkward; the wife so pretty and delicate that he could easily carry her in his hand. Their position in other respects, their history altogether, so harmonises with your story that the girls nervously asked me whether you knew the persons, and described them in jest. I assured them that you did not; and you will do wisely to leave the story unwritten. By delays and pretexts we can manage to find an excuse."

I was very much surprised, for I had not thought of any couple either on this or the other side of the Rhine—indeed, I could not have stated how I came upon the notion. In thought I liked to occupy myself with such jests, without any further reference, and I supposed it would be the same with others, if I related them.

When I came again to my occupations in the city, I felt them to be more burdensome than formerly; for a man born to activity undertakes too much and overburdens himself with labour. That is all well enough, until some physical or moral hindrance comes in the way to show clearly the insufficiency of his powers for the undertaking. I pursued jurisprudence with as much diligence as was necessary in order to take my degree with some credit; medicine attracted me, because it made me see Nature on every side, if it did not reveal her, and I was attached to this by intercourse and habit. To society I was obliged to devote some time and attention, for in many families I found much that was honourable and agreeable. But all this might have been carried on and continued had not that which Herder inculcated on me infinitely oppressed me. He had torn away the curtain which concealed from me the poverty of German literature; he had cruelly destroyed so many of my prejudices; in the heaven of our

fatherland there were few stars of importance left when he treated all the rest as only transient candle-lights ; nay, my own hopes and fancies he had so spoiled that I began to doubt about my own capabilities. At the same time, he dragged me along the splendid, broad road which he himself was disposed to tread, drew my attention to his favourite authors—among whom stood Swift and Hamann—and shook me up with more force than he had depressed me down. To this manifold confusion there was now added a growing passion which, while it threatened to absorb me, might certainly draw me away from those conditions, but could with difficulty elevate me above them. Then there came besides a bodily complaint, namely, that after dinner my throat felt as if it were closed up, which I did not easily get rid of till later, when I gave up a red wine which I had willingly drunk at the boarding-house. This intolerable discomfort had quitted me at Sesenheim, so that I had double pleasure in being there, but when I came back to my town way of living it returned, to my great annoyance. All this made me meditative and morose, and my outward appearance may well have corresponded with my inward feelings.

Being more vexed than ever, as the complaint was violent after dinner, I attended the clinical hospital. The ease and cheerfulness with which our honoured teacher led us from bed to bed, the exact observation of important symptoms, the judgment of the course of the disease in general, the fine Hippocratic method of proceeding, by which, without theory, out of individual experience the forms of knowledge revealed themselves, the concluding addresses with which he usually crowned his lectures—all this attracted me towards him and made a strange department into which I only looked as through a crevice, all the more agreeable and delightful. My disgust at the patients gradually decreased as I learned to transform their various states into distinct conceptions, by which recovery and the restoration of the human form and nature appeared possible. He may well have had his eye on me as a strange young man, and pardoned the peculiar anomaly which brought me to his lectures. On this occasion he did not finish his lecture, as usual, with some teaching which had reference to the disease that had been observed,

but said cheerfully : “ Gentlemen, we have some holidays <sup>1</sup> before us, make use of them to enliven your spirits ; studies must not only be pursued with seriousness and industry, but also with cheerfulness and freedom of mind. Give movement to your bodies, and traverse this beautiful country on horseback or on foot. He who is at home will take delight in that ~~to~~ which he has been accustomed, while for the stranger there will be new impressions and pleasant reminiscences left behind.” There were only two of us to whom this exhortation could be addressed. May this prescription have been as illuminating to the other as it was to me ! I thought I heard a voice from heaven, and hastened as fast as I could to order a horse and dress myself up neatly. I sent for Weyland, but he was not to be found. This did not stop my resolution, but unfortunately the preparation was protracted, and I did not get away as early as I had hoped. Though I rode fast, I was overtaken by the night. The way was not to be mistaken, and the moon cast her light on my impassioned undertaking. The night was windy and chilly. I dashed on, so as not to have to wait till morning before seeing her.

It was already late when I put up my horse at Sesenheim ; the landlord, to my question, whether there was still a light in the parsonage, assured me that the ladies had only just gone home : he thought he had heard that they were expecting a stranger. I did not like that, for I wanted to have been the only one. I hurried on, so as to appear the first, late as it was. I found the two sisters sitting in front of the door. They did not seem much surprised, but I was, when Frederica whispered into Olivia’s ear, loud enough for me to hear : “ Did I not say so ? Here he is.” They led me into a room, where I found a small collation set out. The mother greeted me as an old acquaintance, but when the elder sister saw me by the light she broke out into loud laughter, for she could not easily restrain herself. After this first somewhat peculiar reception the conversation became at once free and cheerful, and what was concealed from me that evening I learned the following day. Frederica had predicted that I should come ; and who does not feel some satisfaction at the fulfilment of a foreboding, even if it is

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<sup>1</sup> Probably the Whitsuntide holidays, 19th May 1771.

a mournful one? All presentiments, if confirmed by the event, give a man a higher opinion of himself; it may be that he thinks he has such a fine sensibility as to feel something in the distance, or so acute as to be conscious of necessary but still uncertain associations. Olivia's laughter also remained no secret; she confessed that it seemed to her very amusing to find me this time so dressed up and decked out. Frederica, on the other hand, found it advantageous not to interpret such a phenomenon as vanity on my part, but rather as a wish to please her.

Early in the morning Frederica asked me to go for a walk. Her mother and sister were busy preparing everything for the reception of several guests. At the side of this loved girl I enjoyed the splendid Sunday morning in the country, as the inestimable Hebel<sup>1</sup> has depicted it. She described to me the company they were expecting, and asked me to stand by her that all the pleasures might, if possible, be common to us both, and entered into in a certain order. Usually, she said, people amuse themselves alone. Play and jest are very lightly enjoyed, so that in the end nothing is left for the one part but to fall back on cards, and for the other to entertain themselves with dancing. We therefore sketched our plan as to what should be done before and after dinner, made each other acquainted with some new social games, were united and happy, when the bell summoned us to church, where by her side I did not find a somewhat dry sermon of her father's too long.

The presence of the beloved one always shortens time, but this hour passed for me amid peculiar reflections. I repeated to myself the good qualities which she had just so freely unfolded before me, cheerfulness with restraint, *naïveté* combined with self-consciousness, hilarity with foresight—qualities which seem incompatible, but which in her met together and marked her outward appearance in a pleasing manner. But I now had to make more serious reflections about myself, which were rather prejudicial to an unrestrained cheerfulness.

Since that passionate girl had cursed and sanctified my lips (for every consecration involves both), I had, superstitiously

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<sup>1</sup> The famous poet, I. P. Hebel, 1760-1826; author of the poem, "Sunday Morning," here referred to.

enough, taken care not to kiss any girl, because I feared that I might injure her in some unheard of spiritual way. I therefore overcame every desire by which a youth feels impelled to win from a charming girl this favour, which may mean much or little. But even in the most well-bred society a burdensome trial awaited me. Even those so-called little games which are more or less intellectual, and by which a joyful young circle is gathered together and united, depend in a great measure on forfeits, in the payment of which kisses have a not unimportant value. I had decided now once and for all not to kiss, and as every want or impediment stimulates us to activities for which we should not otherwise feel inclined, I summoned all the talent and humour I possessed to help myself through and thus to win rather than lose both before the company and for the company. When for the payment of a forfeit a verse was desired, the demand was usually directed to me. Now I was always prepared, and managed on such an occasion to bring out something in praise of the hostess, or of some lady who had shown herself most kind to me. If it happened that a kiss was imposed on me, I endeavoured to extricate myself by some turn which was thought to be satisfactory; and as I had time to think over the matter beforehand, so I was never in want of various pretty things, yet those made on the spur of the moment were always the most successful.

When we got home, the guests, who had arrived from various quarters, were buzzing about merrily with one another, till Frederica gathered them together and invited them to a walk, and conducted them to that beautiful place. There they found a plentiful collation, and wished to fill up the hour before dinner with social games. Here, in agreement with Frederica, though she did not know my secret, I managed to get up and carry through games without forfeits, and redemption of forfeits without kissing.

My skill and readiness were all the more necessary, as the company, which was otherwise quite strange to me, seemed to have suspected some understanding between me and the dear girl, and roguishly took the greatest trouble to force that upon me which I secretly endeavoured to avoid. For in such circles, if one notices a growing affection between young persons, one tries to embarrass them or to bring

them nearer together, just as later on, when a passion has been declared, they are at pains to keep them apart again. Thus, to the man of society, it is a matter of indifference whether he does good or harm, provided only he is entertained.

This morning I was able with some attention to observe the whole character of Frederica, so that for me she always remained the whole time the same. The friendly greetings of the peasants, which were specially directed to her, gave me to understand that she was beneficent to them and awakened in them a feeling of ease. At home the elder sister helped her mother ; nothing which required physical exertion was demanded of Frederica, who was spared, they said, on account of her chest.

There are women who are specially pleasing to us in a room, others who look better in the open air. Frederica belonged to the latter. Her whole being, her form, never appeared so attractive as when she moved along a raised footpath ; the grace of her demeanour seemed to vie with the flowery earth, and the unperturbed cheerfulness of her countenance with the blue sky. She carried home this refreshing atmosphere which surrounded her, and it could soon be noticed that she understood how to smooth over difficulties and easily to obliterate the impressions made by little unpleasant incidents.

The purest joy which we can feel with regard to a beloved person is to find that she pleases others. Frederica's behaviour in society was beneficent to all. On our walks, she hovered about as an animating spirit, and knew how to fill up the gaps which might arise here and there. The lightness of her movements we have already praised, and she was most graceful when she ran. As the deer seems to fulfil its destiny when it flies lightly over the sprouting corn, so did she seem to express her nature most plainly when she sped lightly, running over meadow and furrow, to fetch something that had been forgotten, to look for something which had been lost, to summon a distant couple, or to order something necessary. On these occasions she was never out of breath, and kept completely her equipoise. And so the great anxiety of her parent about her chest must have appeared to many to be excessive. The father, who often accompanied us through fields and meadows, had



not always a suitable companion. I therefore joined myself to him, and he did not fail to touch again on his favourite theme, and to tell me in detail about the building of the new parsonage. He complained particularly that he could not get again the carefully finished sketches, so as to reflect upon them and to consider this or that improvement. I replied that it was easy to replace them, and offered to prepare a ground-plan, on which, after all, everything depended. He was very well contented, and with the necessary measuring the schoolmaster was to give a helping hand ; he then hurried off at once to stir him up, so that the foot and yard measure should be ready the next day.

When he had gone away, Frederica said : " You are very good to humour the weak side of my dear father, and not, like others, who are bored by this subject, to avoid him or break off the conversation. I must, indeed, confess to you that the rest of us do not want this building ; it would be too expensive for the congregation, and for us also. A new house, new furniture ! Our guests would not feel more comfortable with us, now they are accustomed to the old building. Here we can entertain them liberally, there we should find ourselves straitened in a wider space. So the matter stands ; but do not fail to be agreeable to him, I thank you for it from my heart."

Another lady, who joined us, asked about some novels—whether Frederica had read them ; she answered in the negative, for she had read but little altogether. She had grown up in a cheerful, decorous enjoyment of life, and was cultivated accordingly. I had the " Vicar of Wakefield " on the tip of my tongue, but I did not venture to offer it her, the similarity of the situation was too striking and important. " I am fond of reading novels," she said ; " one finds in them such nice people, whom one would like to resemble."

The measurement of the house took place the next day. It was rather a slow business, for I was as little skilled in such arts as the schoolmaster. At last a tolerable design was made. The good father told me his views, and was not dissatisfied when I asked leave to prepare the plan with greater convenience in the town. Frederica dismissed me with joy ; she was convinced of my affection, as I was of hers, and the twenty-four miles no longer appeared any distance.

It was so easy to travel to Drusenheim in the diligence, and by this vehicle, as well as by messengers, ordinary and extraordinary, to maintain a connection, George being made the forwarding agent.

When I had arrived in the town, I busied myself in the earliest hours (for there was no question of a long sleep) with the plan, which I drew as neatly as I could. Meanwhile I had sent her some books and written a few kind words. I at once received an answer and was delighted with her light, pretty, affectionate hand. The contents, too, and the style were natural, good, and loving, as if they came from within, and so the pleasing impression she had made on me was maintained and renewed. I repeated to myself the merits of her charming nature only too willingly, and cherished the hope of seeing her again soon, and for a longer time. There was now no more need for an exhortation from our good instructor: he had, by those words spoken at the right time, completely cured me, so that I did not specially desire to see him and his patients again. The exchange of letters with Frederica became more animated. She invited me to a festival, to which also some friends from the other side of the Rhine would be coming. I was to make arrangements for a longer time. This I did, while I packed a stout carpet bag on the diligence, and in a few hours I found myself in her presence. I met a large and merry company, and took the father on one side and handed over to him the design, at which he showed great delight; I talked over with him what I had thought in completing it: he was beside himself with joy, and specially he praised the neatness of the drawing, which I had practised from my youth upwards, and this time I had taken special trouble, with the finest paper. But this pleasure was very soon spoilt for our good host, when he, in the joy of his heart, contrary to my advice, displayed the design before the company. Far from expressing the expected sympathy, some thought nothing at all of this precious work, others, who considered they knew something about the matter, made it still worse, by blaming the sketch as not in accordance with art, and when the old man for a moment was not looking, they handled these clean sheets as if they were rough drafts, and one, with the hard stroke of a lead pencil, drew his plans of improvement over the fine paper

so roughly, that a restoration of its primitive purity was not to be thought of. I was scarcely able to console the man, who was greatly annoyed at his pleasure being so disgracefully destroyed. I assured him that I had only regarded them as sketches over which we would talk, and on which we would construct new drawings. In spite of all ~~this~~ he went away greatly annoyed, and Frederica thanked me for my attention to her father, as well as for my patience with the bad manners of the other guests.

But in her presence I knew no pain nor vexation. The party was made up of young and tolerably noisy friends, whom, nevertheless, an old gentleman tried to outdo, and proffered even stranger things than they practised. Already, at breakfast, they had not been sparing of the wine ; at a well-furnished dinner-table there was no lack of any enjoyment, and the feast was relished the more by every one after the violent bodily exercise during the somewhat warm weather—and if the elderly official gentleman went a little too far in the good things, the young people were not left far behind him.

I was unboundedly happy by the side of Frederica, talkative, merry, ingenious, forward, and yet restrained by feeling, respect, and attachment. She, in a similar condition, was open, cheerful, sympathetic, and communicative. We appeared to live only for the company, and yet lived solely for each other. After the meal we sought the shade ; social games were started, and the turn came for games of forfeits. On paying the forfeits everything of every kind was carried to excess : the gestures which were demanded, the acts which were to be done, the problems which were to be solved, all showed a wild joy, which knew no limits. I myself increased this wild frolic by many a joke, Frederica shone by many a freakish idea—she seemed to me more delightful than ever ; all hypochondriacal, superstitious fancies vanished from me, and when the opportunity arose of heartily kissing one whom I loved so tenderly, I did not hesitate, still less did I deny myself the repetition of this pleasure.

The hope of the company for music was at last satisfied ; it was heard, and all hastened to dance. *Allemandes*,<sup>1</sup>

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• <sup>1</sup> German dances.

waltzing, and whirling, were beginning, middle, and end. All had grown up to this national dance, even I did honour enough to my private dancing-mistresses<sup>1</sup> and Frederica, who danced as she walked, sprang, and ran, was delighted to find in me a well-practised partner. We generally kept together, but soon there had to be a pause, as on all sides they advised her not to go on in this wild manner. We compensated ourselves by a solitary walk, hand in hand, and, in that quiet place, by the warmest embrace and the most faithful assurance that we loved each other from the bottom of our hearts.

Older persons, who had risen from the game, took us along with them. At supper, people did not return to their sober senses ; they went on dancing till far into the night, and there was as little want of healths and other incitements to drinking as at midday.

I had scarcely slept very profoundly for a few hours when I was awakened by my blood heated and in tumult. It is at such times and in such situations that care and repentance are wont to attack man, who is stretched out defenceless. My imagination at once presented to me the liveliest forms ; I saw Lucinda as, after that ardent kiss, she passionately retreated from me, and, with glowing cheek and sparkling eye, gave utterance to that curse by which she only meant to menace her sister, but by which she unwittingly menaced innocent persons who were strangers to her. I saw Frederica standing opposite her, benumbed at the sight, pale, and feeling the consequences of the curse, of which she knew nothing. I found myself in the midst of them, as little able to ward off the spiritual effects of that adventure as to avoid the kiss which boded evil. The delicate health of Frederica seemed to hasten the threatened calamity, and now her love to me seemed quite unhappy, and I wished myself far away.

But something still more painful, which lay in the background, I will not conceal. A certain conceit kept up that superstition in me ; my lips—consecrated or accursed—seemed to me more important than formerly, and with no little self-complacency I was conscious of my sober behaviour in renouncing many an innocent pleasure, partly to preserve

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<sup>1</sup> The above-mentioned daughters of the French dancing-master.

that magical advantage, partly so as not to injure a harmless being by giving it up. But now all was lost and irrevocable, I had returned into a mere ordinary position ; I thought that I had harmed, irretrievably injured, the dearest of beings, and so instead of becoming free from that curse it was flung back from my lips into my own heart.

All this raged together in my blood, excited by love and passion, wine and dancing, confused my thoughts, tormented my feelings, so that, especially when contrasted with the joys of the preceding day, I seemed to be in a state of despair which knew no bounds. Fortunately, daylight looked in on me through a chink in the shutters, and the sun, coming forth and vanquishing all the powers of the night, set me again upon my feet ; I was soon and speedily refreshed, if not restored.

Superstition, like many other fancies, very easily loses its power when, instead of flattering one's vanity it stands in its way, and would give a bad time to this delicate creature. We then see quite well that we can get rid of it if we choose ; we give it up all the more easily, as all of which we deprive ourselves turns to our advantage. The sight of Frederica, the feeling of her love, the cheerfulness of all around me, all reproached me for harbouring such dismal night-birds in my breast in the midst of the happiest days ; I thought I would frighten them away for ever. The confiding conduct of the loved girl, which became increasingly intimate, made me full of joy, and I found myself truly happy when this time, on taking leave, she openly gave me a kiss as well as the other friends and relations.

In the city many occupations and distractions awaited me, out of which I collected myself by means of a correspondence which I established with my beloved. Even in letters she remained ever the same, whether she related anything new or alluded to well-known occurrences, lightly described or cursorily reflected upon, it was always as if, even with her pen, she was going, coming, running, springing, with a step as light as it was sure. I, too, greatly liked writing to her, for the representation to myself of her good qualities increased my affection even while absent, so that this intercourse was little inferior to a personal one, nay, afterwards it became pleasanter and dearer to me.

For that superstition had been obliged to give way altogether. It was indeed based on impressions of earlier years, but the spirit of the day, the liveliness of youth, the society of cold sensible men, everything was unfavourable to it, so I could not easily have found among all who surrounded me anyone to whom a confession of my fancies would not have been entirely ridiculous. But the worst of it was, that the fancy, while it fled, left behind a real contemplation of that situation in which young people always find themselves, whose early affections can promise themselves no lasting result. So little was I assisted in getting rid of this error that understanding and reflection used me still worse in this case. My passion increased the more I got to know the worth of this excellent girl, and the time drew nigh, when I was to lose, perhaps for ever, so much that was dear and good.

We had passed a long time together quietly and pleasantly, when friend Weyland was roguish enough to bring with him "The Vicar of Wakefield" to Sesenheim, and, when there was a talk of reading aloud, to hand it over to me unexpectedly, as if there was nothing more to be said. I managed to collect myself, and read it as cheerfully and freely as I could. Even the faces of my listeners at once brightened, for it did not seem to them unpleasant to be again forced to make a comparison. If they had found comical counterparts to Raymond<sup>1</sup> and Melusina, so they saw themselves here in a glass which by no means did them injustice. They did not openly confess, but they did not deny, that they were moving among persons akin to them in mind and feeling.

All men of good disposition find, with increasing cultivation, that they have a double part to play in the world, a real and an ideal one, and in this feeling is to be found the basis of all that is noble. The real part which has been assigned to us we experience only too clearly; with regard to the second, we seldom come into a definite knowledge about it. Man may seek his higher destiny on earth or in heaven, in the present or in the future, he nevertheless yet remains exposed to an everlasting wavering, to an ever-disturbing influence from without, until he once for all

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<sup>1</sup> The hero of the story, "The New Melusina."

makes a resolution to declare that that is right which is suitable to his inner being.

Among the idle attempts to cultivate something higher for oneself, to make oneself equal with something higher, belongs the youthful impulse to compare oneself with characters in novels. It is most innocent, and whatever may be argued against it, most free from harm. It entertains us at times when we should perish of *ennui* or grasp at the recreation of passion.

How often is the litany repeated of the harmfulness of novels, and yet what misfortune is it if a pretty girl or a handsome young man put themselves in the place of a person who fares better or worse than themselves. Is the citizen's life worth so much, or do the events of the day absorb the man so much, that he must refuse every fine demand which is made upon him?

The historico-poetical Christian names which have intruded themselves into the German church in place of the sacred names, not seldom to the annoyance of the baptizing clergyman, are doubtless to be regarded as small ramifications of the romantic poetical fiction. This impulse, too, to honour his child with a well-sounding name, though it has not otherwise anything behind it, is praiseworthy, and this union of an imaginary world with the real one spreads over the whole life of the person an agreeable lustre. A beautiful child, whom we call with satisfaction "Bertha," we should think we insulted if we had to call it "Ursel Blandine."<sup>1</sup> For a cultivated man, not to mention a lover, such a name would stick in his throat. One must not blame the cold world, which makes only one-sided judgments, when it puts down everything imaginary which comes forward as ridiculous and objectionable, but the thoughtful connoisseurs of mankind must know how to appreciate it at its proper worth.

For the situation of the lovers on the beautiful bank of the Rhine, this comparison, to which a waggish fellow had compelled them, gave rise to the most agreeable results. We do not think of ourselves when we look in a mirror, but we feel ourselves, and are satisfied. Thus is it also with those moral imitations, in which, as in outline, we recognise

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<sup>1</sup> The name of the bride in Goethe's farce, "The Clown's Wedding."

our manner and inclinations, our habits and peculiarities, and endeavour to grasp and embrace them with brotherly affection.

The habit of being together became more and more confirmed ; there was no other idea but that I belonged to this circle. The affair was allowed to go on without the question being directly raised as to what was likely to come of it. And what parents are there who do not find themselves compelled to let their sons and daughters go on for a time in such uncertain conditions, until accidentally something is settled for life, better than a long pre-arranged plan could have brought about. It was thought that complete confidence could be placed in Frederica's feelings as well as in my rectitude, of which a most favourable opinion had been formed on account of my singular restraint even from innocent caresses. We were left unobserved, as, in the main, was the custom there at that time, and it depended on us to roam over the country, in a larger or smaller party, and to visit friends in the neighbourhood. On either side of the Rhine, in Hagenau, Fort-Louis, Phillipsburg, the Ortenau, I found persons separately whom at Sesenheim I had seen united, every one by himself, a friendly, hospitable host, throwing open his kitchen and cellar as willingly as his gardens and vineyards, indeed the whole neighbourhood. The islands of the Rhine were often the goal of our water picnics. There, without pity, we put the cool inhabitants of the clear Rhine into the kettle, on to the gridiron, into the seething fat, and would here perhaps have settled ourselves in the homely fishermen's huts more than was reasonable, if the horrible Rhine gnats had not driven us away after a few hours. About this intolerable disturbance of one of our finest pleasure parties, where everything else went well, and the affection of the lovers seemed only to increase with the success of the undertaking, and we had come home too soon, stupidly and inopportunately, in the presence of the good vicar I actually broke out into blasphemous expressions that those gnats alone were sufficient to take from me the thought that the world had been created by a good and wise God. The pious old gentleman, in answer, solemnly called me to order, and gave me to understand that these gnats and other vermin had not arisen till after the fall of our first parents, or if they had existed in Paradise,



only buzzed about pleasantly and had not stung. I certainly felt myself at once calmed down, for it is easy to appease an angry man if one is fortunate enough to make him laugh ; I nevertheless asserted that there was no need of the angel with the flaming sword to drive the sinful pair out of the garden : he must rather allow me to imagine that this was effected—by means of great gnats from the Tigris and Euphrates. And so I again made him laugh, for the good man understood a joke, or at least let one pass.

The enjoyment of the daytime and seasons, however, in this splendid country, was more serious and more elevating to the heart. One had but to resign oneself to the present, to enjoy this clearness of the pure sky, the brilliancy of the fertile earth, the soft evenings and the warm nights by the side of the beloved one or in her vicinity. For months together we were favoured by pure ethereal mornings, when the sky displayed itself in all its glory, when it had watered the earth with superfluous dew, and that this spectacle should not become too uniform, clouds towered over the distant mountains, now in this region, now in that. They stood for days, nay, for weeks, without darkening the pure sky, and even the transient storms refreshed the land and made the green more brilliant, which again shone in the sunshine before it could become dry. The double rainbow, the two-coloured borders of a dark grey and almost black streak in the sky, were more splendid, more highly coloured, more definite, but also more fleeting, than I had ever observed.

Amid these surroundings the desire of writing poetry, which I had not felt for a long time, came forward again. For Frederica I composed many songs to well-known melodies. They would have made a pretty little volume, a few of them still remain, they will easily be found among my others.

Since, on account of my strange studies and other occupations, I was often compelled to return to the town, there arose for our affection a new life, which preserved us from all that unpleasantness which is wont to attach itself to such little love affairs as a vexatious consequence. Though far from me, she worked for me, and thought of some new entertainment against my return ; though far from her, I busied myself for her, so that by a new gift or a

new idea, I myself should seem new to her. Painted ribbons had then just become the fashion ; I painted at once for her some pieces, and sent them on with a small poem,<sup>1</sup> as I had to remain away longer than I had intended. In order that I might keep and even go beyond my promise to the father of a new and elaborated plan, I persuaded a young man who understood about architecture to work instead of myself. He had as much pleasure in the task as he had kindness to me, and was still further stimulated by the hope of a good reception into such an agreeable family. He completed the ground plan, elevation, and section of the house ; courtyard and garden were not forgotten, and a detailed but very moderate estimate was added to show that the possibility of carrying out an extensive and costly undertaking was easy and feasible.

These testimonials of our friendly exertions obtained for us the most kind reception, and as the good father saw that we had the best will to serve him, he came forward with yet another wish : this was to see his pretty, one-coloured chair adorned with flowers and ornaments. We showed our willingness. Colour, paint brushes, and other requisites were fetched from the tradesmen and apothecaries of the nearest towns. But that we should not be wanting in a Wakefield-like blunder, we discovered, after everything had been painted most diligently and most brightly, that we had taken a wrong varnish, which would not dry ; neither sunshine nor draught, neither fair nor wet weather were of any avail. Meanwhile we had to make use of an old lumber chest, and nothing was left for us but to rub out the ornamentation with more assiduity than we had painted it. The dislike of this work was further increased when the girls besought us, for heaven's sake, to proceed slowly and carefully, so as to spare the ground, which, however, after this operation, was not to be brought back to its former brilliancy.

By such little unpleasant incidents we were as little disturbed in our cheerful life as Dr Primrose and his amiable family, for both we and our friends and neighbours met with many an unexpected pleasure. Weddings and christenings, the directing of a building, an inheritance, a prize in a lottery,

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<sup>1</sup> The poem, " Welcome and Farewell."

were reciprocally announced and enjoyed. We shared all joy together, like a common property, and knew how to heighten it by intellectual understanding and love. It was not the first nor the last time that I found myself in familiar and social circles just at the moment of their highest blossoming, and if I may flatter myself that I have contributed something to the brightness of such epochs, on the other hand, I must reproach myself that such times passed the more quickly and vanished the sooner.

But now our love had to submit to a singular trial. I will call it trial, though this is not the right word. The country family with which I was intimate had families related to them in the city of good position and reputation, and in their circumstances comfortably off. The young townspeople were often at Sesenheim. The older persons, mothers and aunts, who were less movable, heard so much of the life at Sesenheim, of the increasing charm of the daughters, even of my influence, that they first wished to make my acquaintance; and after I had often called on them and had been well received, they wished to see us all once together, especially as they thought they owed them a friendly reception in return.

There was much discussion on all sides. The mother could with difficulty leave her housekeeping; Olivia had a horror of the town, for which she was not fitted; Frederica had no inclination for it: and so the affair was put off until it was brought to a decision by the fact that it was impossible for me to come into the country for a fortnight, and it was better to see each other in the city, and with some restraint, than not to see each other at all. And so I now found my friends, whom I had been accustomed to see only in a rural scene, whose image had hitherto appeared to me before a background of waving boughs, flowing brooks, nodding field flowers, and a horizon open for miles; now for the first time I saw them in the rooms of a city, which were indeed spacious, but yet confined, when we consider the carpets, mirrors, clocks, and china figures.

The relation to that which one loves is so decided that the surroundings have little to do with it, but the heart requires that they should be suitable, natural, and customary. With my lively feeling for everything I could not at once adapt myself to the contradiction of the moment. The

decorous, tranquil, noble demeanour of the mother was entirely suitable to this circle : she was not different from the other ladies. Olivia, on the other hand, showed herself to be impatient, like a fish out of water. As she had formerly called to me in the garden, or beckoned me aside in the field when she had something particular to say to me, she did also the same here, when she drew me into the recess of a window. She did this with embarrassment and unskilfully, because she felt that it was not suitable, and yet she did it. She had the most unimportant things in the world to say, nothing that I did not already know—that she was extremely uncomfortable, that she wished herself by the Rhine, over the Rhine, or even in Turkey. Frederica, on the other hand, was highly remarkable in this situation. Properly speaking, she did not suit it, but it exhibited her character, for, instead of adapting herself to this condition, she unconsciously fashioned the condition according to herself. As she behaved in the country with the society, so she did here. Every moment she managed to enliven it. Without creating disturbance, she set everything in motion, and just by this quieted the society, which really is only made restless by *ennui*. She thus completely fulfilled the wishes of her town aunts, who wanted, if only for once, from their sofas, to be witnesses of those country games and amusements. If this was done to satisfaction, so also were the wardrobe, the ornaments, and whatever specially distinguished the town cousins, who were dressed in the French fashion, considered and admired without envy. With me, too, Frederica made things quite easy, as she treated me the same as ever. She seemed to give me no other preference but that of directing her desires and wishes to me rather than to another, and thereby recognising me as her servant.

She confidently laid claim to this service on one of the following days, when she intimated to me that the ladies wished to hear me read. The daughters of the house had spoken much about this, for at Sesenheim I had read what and when I was desired. I was at once ready, only asked for quiet and attention for some hours. This was agreed to, and I read on one evening the whole of "Hamlet" uninterruptedly, entering into the sense of the piece as well as I was able, expressing myself with animation and passion, as is the privilege of youth. I earned great applause.

Frederica drew her breath deeply from time to time, and a transient blush passed over her cheeks. These two symptoms of a tender heart that is moved, while externally cheerfulness and calm were apparent, were not unknown to me, and were the only reward for which I had striven. She joyfully collected the thanks of the party, because she had caused me to ~~read~~, and in her graceful manner did not deny herself the little pride of having shone in me and through me.

This town visit was not to have lasted long, but the departure was delayed. Frederica did her part for the social amusement; I, too, was not wanting, but the abundant resources which are so productive in the country soon dried up in the town, and the situation was all the more painful as the elder daughter gradually lost all composure. The two sisters were the only members of the family who dressed in the German fashion. Frederica had never thought of herself in any other way, and supposed she was so right everywhere that she never made comparison with anyone else; but for Olivia it was quite intolerable to go about in this apparently distinguished society dressed like servant-girls. In the country she had scarcely noticed the town dress of others, and did not desire it; in the town she could not endure the country costume. All this, added to the *savoir faire* of the town ladies, and to the hundred trifling circumstances quite opposed to her own, so raged for some days in her impassioned bosom that I had to direct all my flattering attention to appeasing her, as Frederica wished. I feared a passionate scene. I foresaw the moment when she would throw herself at my feet and implore me by all that was sacred to rescue her from this condition. She was divinely good if she could conduct herself in her own way, but such a restraint made her uncomfortable, and could at last drive her to despair. Now I endeavoured to hasten that which the mother and Olivia desired, and to which Frederica was not opposed. I did not refrain from praising her in contrast to her sister. I told her how pleased I was to find her unaltered and, even in these circumstances, as free as the bird among the branches. She was kind enough to reply that I was there, and she did not wish to go either in or out, if I was with her.

At last I saw them drive away, and it seemed as though

a stone fell from my heart, for my feelings had shared the situation of Frederica and Olivia: certainly I was not passionately harassed like the latter, but I felt in no way comfortable like the former.

Since I had, strictly speaking, gone to Strasburg in order to take my degree, it was a part of the irregularity of my life that I looked upon such a principal business as a secondary matter. The anxiety about my examination I had put aside in a very easy way, but now I had to think of the disputation, for when I left Frankfort I had promised my father and firmly set before myself to write one. It is the fault of those who can do many things, nay, much, that they trust everything to themselves, and youth must be in this condition if anything is to be made of it. I had pretty well acquired a survey of the science of jurisprudence and its general framework. Some subjects of the law interested me sufficiently, and I thought, as I had taken the good Leyser<sup>1</sup> for my model, that I should get through fairly well with my own little natural sense. Great movements were appearing in jurisprudence, judgments were to be more in accordance with equity; all customary rights were seen to be daily compromised, and over the criminal department especially a great change was impending. As regards myself I felt truly that I lacked a great deal in order to complete the juridical subject which I had proposed to myself; no inner impulse urged me to those subjects, all direction from outside, too, was lacking—in fact, an entirely different<sup>2</sup> faculty had carried me away. In the main, if I was to take any interest in a thing, I must win something from it, I must be conscious of something in it which appeared fruitful to me and gave me prospects. Thus I had well noted down some materials, and had even made collections upon them, and had taken in hand my literary gleanings and considered the point which I wished to maintain—the scheme according to which I wished to arrange the several elements—and once more worked at it for a time; but I was clever enough soon to see that I could not get on, and that to treat of a special matter a special and long-continued industry was requisite—in fact, such a special task cannot

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<sup>1</sup> Professor at Wittenburg, 1683-1754.

<sup>2</sup> *I.e.*, medicine.

be completed with success unless upon the whole one is, if not master, at least an old hand.

The friends to whom I communicated my embarrassment found me ridiculous, because one can dispute upon theses as well, nay, even better than upon a treatise,<sup>1</sup> and in Strasburg this was not uncommon. To such an expedient I let myself be well disposed ; but my father, to whom I wrote about it, wanted a regular work, which, as he thought, I could very well carry out if I only wished and gave myself proper time for it. I was now compelled to throw myself on some general subject, and to choose something which was familiar to me. Church history was almost better known to me than secular history, and the conflict in which the Church—the publicly recognised worship of God—finds itself, and always will find itself, in two directions, always highly interested me. For at one time it lies in an everlasting strife with the State, over which it will exalt itself, and then with individuals, all of whom it wishes to gather to itself. The State, on its side, will not yield overlordship to the Church, and the individuals oppose themselves to coercive power. The State wishes everything for public, universal ends ; the individual for ends which belong to the home, the heart, and the feelings. Of such movements I had been witness from childhood upwards, in which the clergy quarrelled now with their authorities, now with their congregation. I had therefore established it in my youthful mind that the State—the legislator—had the right to determine a worship in accordance with which the clergy must teach and conduct themselves ; the laity, on the other hand, should adjust themselves publicly and openly with precision ; furthermore, there should be no question about each one's ideas, how he thinks and feels. Therefore I believed that I had once for all got rid of all collisions. I therefore chose for my disputation the first half of this theme, namely, that the legislator was not only justified but bound to establish a certain worship from which neither the clergy nor the laity might free themselves. I carried out this theme partly historically, partly by argumentation, as I showed that all public religions had been introduced by leaders of armies, kings, and mighty men, and that this had even been

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<sup>1</sup> A larger, scientific essay.

the case with Christianity. The example of Protestantism lay quite close at hand. I went to work at this labour all the more boldly as I really only wrote it to satisfy my father, and desired and hoped nothing more ardently than that it might not pass the censorship.<sup>1</sup> From Behrisch I had acquired an invincible dislike to seeing anything of mine in print, and my intercourse with Herder had revealed my insufficiency all too clearly to me, indeed a certain mistrust of myself had thus been completely matured.

As I created this work almost entirely out of myself, wrote and spoke Latin with fluency, the time which I expended on the treatise passed very pleasantly. The matter had at least some foundation; the statement of the case, from a rhetorical point of view, was not bad, and the whole was pretty well rounded off. As soon as I had finished it, I went through it with a good Latin scholar, who, though he could not improve my style on the whole, yet he easily removed all striking defects, so that something was produced which was fit to be shown. A neat copy was at once sent to my father, who certainly did not approve of it, as none of the subjects previously taken in hand had been worked out; however, as a thoroughgoing Protestant, he was well contented with the boldness of the undertaking. My strange method was tolerated, my effort was praised, and he promised himself an important effect from the publication of this little work.

I now handed over my papers to the faculty who, fortunately, behaved in a manner as prudent as it was courteous. The dean, a lively, clever man, began with much praise of my work, then went on to what was doubtful in the same, which by degrees he managed to change into something dangerous, and therewith came to the conclusion that it might not be advisable to publish this work as an academic dissertation. The candidate had shown himself to the faculty as a young man who thought, and from whom the best might be expected; they were willing, so as not to delay the affair, to let me dispute on theses. I could afterwards publish my treatise as it stood, or more elaborated, in Latin or in any other language; as a private individual and a Protestant, this would everywhere be

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<sup>1</sup> Of the University authorities.



easy for me to do, and I should enjoy an applause more clear and more general. I scarcely concealed from the good man what a stone his exhortation had rolled from my heart ; at every fresh argument which he addressed that he might not trouble me nor make me angry by his refusal, my mind became more and more at ease, and so did his also, when, quite unexpectedly, I made no opposition to his reasons, but found them extremely obvious and promised in everything to conduct myself according to his counsel and guidance. I now sat down again with my tutor. Theses were selected and printed, and the disputation, amid the opposition of my fellow-boarders, went off with great merriment, and even with facility, for my old practice of turning over the "Corpus Juris" was very serviceable to me, and I could pass for a well-instructed man. A good feast, according to custom, concluded the solemnity.

My father, meantime, was very dissatisfied that this little work had not been printed properly as a disputation, because he had hoped that on my entrance into Frankfort I should gain honour by it. He wished, therefore, to have it published specially ; I explained to him that the subject, which was only outlined, could at some future time be further carried out. With this object he carefully put up the manuscript, and I saw it among his papers many years afterwards.

I took my degree on 6th August 1771, and on the following day Schöpflin died, in the seventy-fifth year of his age. He had had an important influence on me without closer contact ; for eminent contemporaries may be compared with the greater stars, towards which, so long as they stand above the horizon, our eye is turned, and feels strengthened and cultivated, if it is only permitted to take such perfections into itself. Bountiful Nature had given to Schöpflin an advantageous exterior, a slender form, kindly eyes, an eloquent mouth, and a thoroughly agreeable presence. Nor had she been niggardly of intellectual gifts to her favourite, and his good fortune was the result of innate and quietly cultivated merits, without any troublesome exertion. He belonged to those happy individuals who are disposed to unite the past and the present, and understand how to connect historical knowledge with the interests of life.

Born in the territory of Baden, educated at Basle and Strasburg, he quite properly belonged to that paradise-like valley of the Rhine, as a widely extended and well-situated fatherland. Being directed towards historical and antiquarian subjects, he readily grasped them with a felicitous power of representation, and retained them by the most opportune memory. Desirous as he was both of learning and teaching, he pursued a course of study and of life, which alike moved forwards. He soon stands out and rises above the rest, without interruption of any kind ; with ease he spreads himself over the literary and social world, for historical knowledge passes everywhere, and affability makes attachments everywhere. He travels through Germany, Holland, France, and Italy, comes in contact with all the learned men of his time ; he entertains princes, and it is only when the hours of table or audience are prolonged by his lively loquacity that he becomes tedious to the people at court. On the other hand, he acquires the confidence of statesmen, works out for them the most basic problems, and so finds everywhere a theatre for his talents. They want to retain him in many places, but he remains loyal to Strasburg and the French court. His immovable German honesty is recognised even there, he is even protected against the powerful Prætor Klingling, who is secretly hostile to him. Sociable and talkative by nature, he expands himself in intercourse with the world as well as in knowledge and occupations, and we should hardly be able to understand where he got all his time, did we not know that a dislike of women accompanied him through his whole life ; and thus he gained many days and hours which are happily thrown away by those who are favourably inclined to ladies.

For the rest, as an author, he belongs to the ordinary sort of character, and, as an orator, to the multitude. His programme, his speeches, and addresses are devoted to the particular day, to the approaching solemnity ; nay, his great work, "*Alsatia Illustrata*," belongs to life, as he recalls the past, freshens up faded forms, reanimates the hewn and the formed stone, and brings a second time before the eyes and mind of the reader obliterated, broken inscriptions. In such a way all Alsace and the neighbouring country are filled with his activity, in Baden and the Palatinate he

preserves to an extreme old age an unbroken influence ; at Mannheim he founds the Academy of Sciences, and remains President of it till his death.

I never came near this distinguished man, except on one night when we gave him a serenade by torchlight. The courtyard of the old chapter-house, overarched by lime trees, was more filled with smoke than illuminated by our pitch-torches. When the noise of the music had ended, he came down and stepped amongst us, and here he was just in his right place. The slender, well-developed, cheerful old man, with his easy, unrestrained bearing, stood worthily before us, and held us deserving of a well-considered address, which he spoke in a paternal and affectionate manner without a trace of reserve or pedantry, so that we really thought ourselves something for the moment, since he treated us like the kings and princes whom he had so often been called upon to address in public. We showed our satisfaction loudly, trumpets and drums resounded repeatedly, and the dear, hopeful, academic common folk stole away home with inner satisfaction.

His scholars and companions in study, Koch<sup>1</sup> and Oberlin, were in nearer connection with me. I had a passionate love for antiquarian remains. They often let me look at the museum, which contained, in many forms, the proofs of his (Schöpflin's) great work on Alsace. Even this work I had not known intimately till after that journey, when I had found antiquities on the spot, and now being completely advanced, on longer or shorter expeditions I was able to represent to myself the valley of the Rhine as a Roman possession, and while awake finish colouring many a dream of the past.

Scarcely had I made some progress in this, when Oberlin directed my attention to the monuments of the Middle Ages, and made me acquainted with the ruins and the remains, the seals and the documents, which are still left behind ; he even tried to inspire me with a love for the so-called Minnesingers and heroic poets. To this excellent man, as well as to Herr Koch, I have been greatly indebted, and if things had gone according to their wish, I should have had

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<sup>1</sup> 1737-1813. Professor at Strasburg, author of numerous literary and historical works.

to thank them for the happiness of my life. The matter stood as follows :—

Schöpflin, who his whole life had moved in the higher sphere of political law, and well knew the great influence which such and kindred studies are likely to procure for a sound head, in courts and cabinets, felt an insuperable, nay; an unjust, aversion from the position of a civilian,<sup>1</sup> and had influenced his pupils with the same sentiments. The above-mentioned two men, friends of Salzmann, had taken notice of me in a friendly manner. My impassioned grasp of external objects, the way in which I could represent their advantages and communicate to them a special interest, they prized higher than I did myself. My slight and, I may say, scanty occupation with the civil law had not remained unnoticed by them ; they knew me well enough to realise how easily I was influenced ; of my liking for an academic life I had made no secret, and they thought, therefore, to gain me over to history, political law, and rhetoric, at first only in passing, but afterwards more decidedly. Strasburg itself offered sufficient advantages. The prospect of the German chancery at Versailles, the precedent of Schöpflin, whose merits indeed seemed to me unattainable, were to incite me to emulation, if not to imitation, and perhaps thereby a similar talent was to be cultivated, which might be profitable indeed to him who could boast of it, and useful to others who might think of using it on their own account. These, my patrons, and Salzmann with them, set great value on my memory and my capacity for apprehending the sense of languages, and by these chiefly they sought to advance their views and projects. I now intend to describe how nothing came of all this, and how I passed over again from the French to the German side. I must be allowed, as hitherto, some general reflections by way of transition.

There are few biographies which can represent a pure, quiet, steady progress of the individual. Our life, as well as the whole in which we are contained, is in an incomprehensible manner composed of freedom and necessity. Our will is a prediction of what we shall do under all circumstances. But these circumstances lay hold of us in their

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<sup>1</sup> A private as opposed to a Court official.

own way. The *what* lies in us, and *how* seldom depends on us, after the wherefore we dare not ask, and therefore we are rightly directed to the *quia*.<sup>1</sup>

From my youth upwards I had liked the French language, I had learnt to know it in a bustling life, and a bustling life by means of it. Like a second mother tongue, it had become my own, without grammar and instruction, by intercourse and practice. Now I wished to make use of it with greater fluency, and preferred Strasburg as a second university residence to other high schools ; but, unfortunately, it was just there that I had the reverse of my hopes, and was turned rather from than to this language and these manners.

The French, who in the main make a study of good behaviour, are indulgent towards foreigners who begin to speak their language ; they will not laugh at anyone for a fault, or blame except by a circumlocution. Since, however, they cannot endure sins committed against their language, they have a way of repeating, as it were, courteously, emphasising what has been said with another term, at the same time making use of the proper expression which should have been employed, and thus they lead the intelligent and attentive to what is right and suitable.

Now, if one is in earnest, if one has enough self-denial to profess oneself a pupil, one gains by it, and is advanced by this plan, yet one always feels in some measure humiliated ; and, since one also talks for the sake of the subject-matter, often when too much interrupted, even distracted, one impatiently lets the conversation drop. This occurred to me more than to others, because I always thought that I had something interesting to say, and, on the other hand, to hear something important, and did not wish always to be brought back merely to the expression, a case which often happened to me, as my French was more varied than that of any other foreigners. I had taken notice of the idiom and accent of servants, valets and guards, actors young and old, theatrical lovers, peasants and heroes, and this Babel-like idiom was made still more confused by a peculiar ingredient, as I liked to hear the French reformed clergy, and visited their churches the more willingly, as a

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<sup>1</sup> Man must act in a definite way, which is prescribed for him, and he is not justified in asking after the causes.

Sunday walk to Bockenheim was not only permitted but ordered. But even this was not enough, for as in my youthful years I had always been directed to the German of the sixteenth century, I soon included in my affection the French of that splendid epoch. Montaigne, Amyot, Rabelais, Marot, were my friends, and aroused in me sympathy and delight. Now all these different elements moved in my speech chaotically one with another, so that for the hearer the meaning was mostly lost owing to the peculiarity of the expression, indeed, a cultivated Frenchman could no more politely correct me, but had to correct and tutor me in plain terms. It therefore happened with me here once more as at Leipsic, only this time I could not appeal to the right of my native place to speak idiomatically, as well as other provinces ; but here on foreign ground and soil, I had to adapt myself to traditional laws.

Perhaps we might have resigned ourselves to this, if an evil genius had not whispered into our ears that all endeavour by a foreigner to speak French would always remain unsuccessful : for a practised ear can perfectly well detect a German, Italian, or Englishman under his French disguise. One is tolerated, but never received into the bosom of the only church with correct language. Only a few exceptions were granted. They named to us a Herr von Grimm,<sup>1</sup> but even Schöppflin did not reach the summit. They admitted that he had early seen the necessity of expressing himself perfectly in French ; they approved of his disposition to converse with every one, and especially to entertain the great and persons of rank ; they praised him, that living in the place where he was, he had endeavoured to make the language of the country his own, and to render himself as much as possible a Frenchman of society and an orator. But what does he gain by the denial of his mother tongue, and his efforts after a foreign one ? He cannot make it right with anyone. In society they regard him as vain, as if anyone would or could converse with others without some feeling for self and self-complacency. Then the refined connoisseurs of the world and of language assert that he goes in more for disquisition and dialogue than for

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<sup>1</sup> 1723-1807, an intimate friend of Diderot's. Goethe made his acquaintance at Gotha in 1777.

conversation properly so-called. The former was universally regarded as the original and fundamental sin of the Germans, the latter as the cardinal virtue of the French. As public orator he fares no better. If he prints a well-elaborated address to the king or the princes, the Jesuits, who dislike him as a Protestant, are on the look out and show that his turns of expression are not French. Instead of consoling ourselves with this, and bearing as green wood that which had been laid upon the dry, this pedantic injustice, on the other hand, annoyed us. We are in despair, and by this striking example we convince ourselves that it is a vain effort to try to satisfy the French by the matter itself, as they are too closely bound to the external conditions under which everything has to appear. We therefore take hold of the opposite resolution of abandoning the French language altogether, and devoting ourselves more than ever with might and earnestness to our mother tongue.

For this, too, we found opportunity and sympathy in actual life. Alsace<sup>1</sup> had not yet been united with France so long that there did not still exist with old and young an affectionate attachment to the old constitution, manners, language, and dress. If the conquered party is compelled to lose half his existence, he calculates that it is a disgrace voluntarily to surrender the other half, he therefore keeps close to all that which can recall the good old time and nourish in him the hope of the return of a happy epoch. Very many inhabitants of Strasburg formed little circles, separate, indeed, yet united in spirit, which were always being increased and recruited by the numerous subjects of German princes who, under French suzerainty, possessed considerable pieces of land ; since fathers and sons, either for the sake of study or business, stayed a longer or shorter time at Strasburg.

At our table only German was spoken. Salzmann expressed himself in French with much fluency and elegance, but was indisputably a perfect German in regard to his aims and actions. Lersé could be set up as the pattern of a German youth. Meyer, of Lindau, preferred to saunter along in good German rather than to get a grasp of good French ; and if, among the others, many were disposed to

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<sup>1</sup> Since the occupation of Strasburg, 1681.

the Gallic speech and manners, they yet, so long as they were with us, allowed the general tone to prevail with them. From the language we turned to political affairs. We had not, certainly, much to say in praise of our imperial constitution ; we admitted that it consisted of mere legal abuses, but exalted ourselves so much the more above the present French constitution, which lost itself in mere lawless abuses ; while the government only let its energy be seen in the wrong place, and was obliged to allow that a complete change of affairs was already publicly prophesied with dark forebodings. On the other hand, if we looked to the north, there shone upon us Frederick, the polar star, round whom seemed to turn Germany, Europe, nay, the whole world. His superiority in everything manifested itself most strongly when the Prussian form of exercise, and even the Prussian stick were introduced into the French Army. For the rest, we forgave him his predilection for a foreign language, since we felt satisfied that his French poets, philosophers, and literary men continued to annoy him, and frequently declared that he was only to be treated as an intruder.

But what more than everything else forcibly alienated us from the French was the repeatedly impolite assertion that the Germans in general, as well as the king, who was striving after French culture, was deficient in taste. With regard to this kind of talk which, like a refrain, followed every judgment, we endeavoured to calm ourselves by contempt ; but we felt all the less clear on the subject because Menage<sup>1</sup> had already said that the French writers possessed everything except taste, and also had learned from the Paris of the day that the newest authors were all wanting in taste, and that Voltaire himself could not escape this most severe reproach. We had already before been repeatedly directed to Nature, we would therefore allow nothing but truth and sincerity of feeling, and the rapid, blunt expression of it.

“ Friendship, love, and brotherhood,  
Of themselves are understood,”

was the watchword and battle cry with which the members

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<sup>1</sup> 1613-1682, French writer, who founded a salon in opposition to the academy. He was ridiculed by Moliere in “*Les Femmes Savantes*.”



of our little academic party were accustomed to recognise and enliven one another. This maxim lay at the foundation of all our social banquets, on which occasions we did not fail to pay many an evening visit to Cousin Michel,<sup>1</sup> in his well-known German character.

In what has hitherto been described, if only external fortuitous causes and personal peculiarities are found, the French literature had in itself certain qualities which would repel rather than attract the aspiring youth. It was advanced in years and respectable, and by neither of these qualities can youth, looking about for enjoyment of life and freedom, be delighted.

Since the sixteenth century the course of French literature had never been seen to be completely interrupted, indeed, the internal and religious disturbances, as well as the external wars, had accelerated its progress, but, as we heard generally maintained, it was a hundred years ago that it had existed in its full bloom. By favourable circumstances a plentiful harvest had at once ripened, and had been happily garnered, so that the greatest talents of the eighteenth century must be modestly contented only with gleanings.

But meantime much had become antiquated ; first of all comedy, which must always be freshened up again to adapt itself, less perfectly, indeed, but still with new interest to actual life and manners. Many of the tragedies had vanished from the stage, and Voltaire did not let slip from his hands the important opportunity of editing Corneille's works,<sup>2</sup> in order to show how defective his predecessor had been, whom, according to the general voice, he had not equalled.

And now even this very Voltaire, the marvel of his time, had himself grown old, like the literature which he had animated, and ruled for nearly a quarter of a century. By his side there still existed and vegetated many *littérateurs*, in a more or less active and happy old age, who one by one disappeared. The influence of society upon authors increased more and more ; for the best society, consisting of persons of birth, rank, and property, chose literature for one of their chief entertainments, which thus became quite

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<sup>1</sup> "Michel" is to the Germans what "John Bull" is to the English.

<sup>2</sup> He wished, by a new edition of Corneille's works, to give a dowry to the great niece of the poet, who was poor.

social and respectable. Persons of rank and literary men mutually cultivated and mutually perverted one another ; for everything respectable is inclined to be negative, and French criticism became negative, destructive, and spiteful. The higher class made use of such judgments against the authors ; the authors, with somewhat less decency, proceeded in the same way against one another, and even against their patrons. If the public was not to be imposed upon, they endeavoured to take it by surprise or to win it by humility, and thus there arose—apart from that which stirred church and state to their inmost—a literary ferment, so that Voltaire himself required his full activity and all his superiority to raise himself above the torrent of universal disregard. He was already openly called an old, self-willed child ; his labours, carried on indefatigably, were regarded as the vain effort of an old age which had become decrepit ; certain principles on which he had stood all his life, to the spread of which he had devoted his days, were no more honoured or esteemed ; nay, his God, by the confession of whom he continued to separate himself from all atheism, was not conceded to him,<sup>1</sup> and thus he himself, the grandsire and patriarch, like his youngest competitor, was obliged to watch the present moment, to catch at new favour—to show too much good to his friends and too much evil to his enemies, and under the appearance of a passionate striving for the love of truth, to act deceitfully and falsely. Was it, then, worth while to have led such a great active life, if it was to end in a greater state of dependence than that in which it had begun. How intolerable such a position was did not escape his lofty mind, his delicate sensibility. He frequently eased himself by starts and jerks, gave the rein to his humour, and kicked over the traces with a few feints, at which both friends and enemies showed themselves displeased, for every one thought he could see beyond him, though no one was his equal. A public that always hears only the judgments of old men gets too easily wise beyond its years, and nothing is more inadequate than a mature judgment when adopted by an immature mind.

To us youths, before whose eyes there ever hung, with

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<sup>1</sup> The Materialists, such as La Mettrie, who spoke of Nature as the creative force, in opposition to Voltaire, who emphasised the necessity of belief in God.

our German love of Nature and truth, honesty towards ourselves and others as the best guide in life and learning, the partisan dishonesty of Voltaire and his misrepresentation of so many worthy objects became ever more irritating, and daily confirmed us in our dislike of him. In order to damage the so-called priestcraft, he had never been able sufficiently to depreciate religion and the holy books on which it is based. This had given me an unpleasant feeling. But when I understood that, in order to weaken the tradition of a flood, he denied all fossil shells,<sup>1</sup> and declared that they were only freaks of Nature, then he lost my confidence completely; for my observation on the Baschberg had shown me clearly enough that I was standing at the bottom of a dried-up sea, among the exuvix of its aboriginal inhabitants. Yes, these mountains had once been covered with waves, whether before or during the flood was to me of little importance. I could not be disabused of the idea that the valley of the Rhine had been an immense lake, a bay beyond which the eye could not see.

The French literature was, therefore, antiquated and respectable, both in itself, and through the influence of Voltaire. Let us devote some consideration to this remarkable man. From youth up Voltaire's wishes and endeavours were turned to active and social life, to politics, to the acquisition of money on a large scale, to his relation to the chiefs of the world, and to his employment of this relation, so that he himself might belong to the chiefs of the world. No one ever made himself so dependent in order to be independent. He succeeded in subjugating the mind of the nation; it yielded to him. In vain his enemies displayed their moderate talents and a tremendous hatred; nothing succeeded in doing him injury. With the court, indeed, he could not become reconciled, but foreign kings were his tributaries. Katherine and Frederic the Great, Gustavus of Sweden, Christian of Denmark, Poniatowsky<sup>2</sup> of Poland, Henry of Prussia, Charles of Brunswick, declared themselves his vassals; even the popes<sup>3</sup> thought it necessary to coax him by some concessions. That Joseph II. kept away from him did not redound to the honour of that prince: for it

<sup>1</sup> This he did in a work entitled "*Des Singularités de la Nature*," 1768.

<sup>2</sup> Stanislaus II., August, King of Poland.

<sup>3</sup> Certainly one of them, Clement XIV.

would not have injured him and his undertakings if, with so fine an understanding and such splendid sentiments, he had been more intellectual and valued better the things of the mind.

What I bring forward here concisely and connectedly, sounded at that period on our ears, as the rumour of the moment, as a perpetual discord, uninstrusive, and disconnected. We heard always the praise of those who had gone before us. The good and new were always in demand, but the newest was never wanted. Hardly had a French national patriot put upon the long petrified theatre objects of an elevating character, hardly had the "Siege of Calais"<sup>1</sup> won for itself enthusiastic applause, than this piece, with all its national companions, was cast aside as empty and worthless. The pictures of manners by Destouches, from which when a boy I had had so much pleasure, were pronounced weak, the name of this honourable man passed into oblivion. And how many other writers could I not name for whose sake I endured the reproach of judging like a provincial, if I showed any interest in such men and their works, as opposed to anyone who floated on the current of the newest literature.

Thus we became ever an increasing source of annoyance to our other German companions. According to our sentiments and our natural peculiarities, we liked to keep a firm hold of our impressions of objects, to work upon them slowly, and, if it were necessary, to abandon them as late as possible. We were convinced that by faithful observation, persistent effort, some profit could be got from everything, and that by persevering zeal one could arrive at a point from which both the judgment and the reason for it could be expressed at the same time. We did not fail to see that the great and splendid French world offered us many an advantage and much profit, for Rousseau had really harmonised with our tastes. But if we looked at his life and fortune, we saw that the greatest reward for all that he had accomplished was to live in Paris unnoticed and forgotten. When we heard the encyclopædists<sup>2</sup> spoken of, or opened a volume of their enormous work, we felt as

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<sup>1</sup> By de Belley; it appeared in 1765.

<sup>2</sup> Here are meant specially the Materialistic writers, *e.g.*, d'Alembert and Diderot.

though we were amongst the countless bobbins and looms of a great factory. Amid the buzzing and rattling of the machinery, which confused the eyes and mind, and the manifold and incomprehensible intricacies of the whole, in the consideration of all that goes to the making of a piece of cloth, we began to feel disgusted with the coat we were actually wearing.

Diderot was nearly enough related to us, for, in all that the French find fault in him, he is a true German. But even his standpoint was too high, and his vision too wide, for us to attach ourselves to him and to be able to stand by his side. His children of Nature, however, whom he knew how to elevate and ennoble with great rhetorical art, pleased us very much. His bold poachers and smugglers delighted us, and this crew, in consequence, has grown all too luxuriantly on the German Parnassus. So it was he, then, like Rousseau, who propagated a feeling of disgust for the social life, a calm introduction to those immense world changes, in which all that had existed seemed to disappear.

Let us, however, lay these reflections aside and notice what influence these two men exerted upon Art. Here, too, they directed and impelled us to Nature.

The highest problem of every art is by means of appearance to produce the illusion of a loftier reality. It is, however, a false effort which, by making the appearance real, finishes by leaving in it only the common and actual.

As an ideal locality, the stage, by the application of the laws of perspective to *coulisses* ranged one behind the other, had gained the greatest advantage; and now they wanted to throw this wantonly away, to close up the wings, and to form actual rooms with walls. With such an arrangement of the stage, the piece itself, the playing of the actors, in short, the whole was to harmonise, and thus a completely new theatre was to be created.

The French actors in comedy had reached the summit of true art. Residence in Paris, observation of the externals of court people, the relations of actors and actresses with the higher ranks, by means of love affairs, all contributed to the transplanting of the highest elegance and propriety of social life on to the stage. With this the friends of Nature had little to complain of; still they thought they had made a great step forward when they selected serious and

tragic subjects for their pieces, of which, even in common life, there was no lack, made use of prose also to express more elevated feelings, and thus, at length, banished the unnatural verse, together with the unnatural declamation and gesticulation.

It is highly remarkable, though not so generally noticed, that even the strong, old rhythmic artistic tragedy was at this time threatened with a revolution, which was only averted by great talent and the power of tradition.

To the actor Lecain,<sup>1</sup> who played his heroes with especial theatrical decorum, with energy, elevation, and power, and kept himself far from all that was natural and ordinary, a man of the name of Aufresne<sup>2</sup> opposed himself. He declared war on all that was unnatural, and in his tragic acting sought to express the highest truth. This procedure could not fit in with that of the other Parisian actors. He stood alone, they kept close to one another, and he, obstinately persisting in his opinion, preferred to leave Paris, and came through Strasburg. There we saw him play the part of Augustus in "Cinna," of Mithridates, and other similar characters, with the truest and most natural dignity. He was a fine, tall man, rather slender than strong, not strictly of an imposing appearance, but noble and pleasing. His acting was reflective and calm, without being cold, and powerful enough, where power was demanded. He was a most practical artist, and of the few who knew how to change Art into Nature, and Nature completely into Art. These are they, in fact, whose misunderstood advantages always give rise to the teaching of false naturalness.

Here I will mention a small but remarkably epoch-making work—it is Rousseau's "Pygmalion."<sup>3</sup> Much could be said about it; for this strange production wavers between Nature and Art, with the false attempt of resolving the latter into the former. We see an artist who has accomplished a most perfect creation, still does not find satisfaction in seeing his idea outside himself, and having lent to it a higher life; it must be brought down to him into the

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<sup>1</sup> 1728-78. By the influence of Voltaire, a member of the Théâtre français, 1759.

<sup>2</sup> Son of a Geneva watchmaker, obtained the greatest success in Italy, Prussia, and Russia.

<sup>3</sup> First acted in 1770.

earthly life. He wishes to destroy the highest which intellect and action can achieve by the commonest act of sensuality.

All this and much else, wise and foolish, true and half-true, which worked upon us contributed to the confusion of our conceptions ; we wandered about on various by-paths and roundabout ways, and thus from many sides was that German literary revolution<sup>1</sup> prepared, of which we were the witnesses and to which we consciously or unconsciously, willingly or unwillingly, contributed without cessation.

We felt no impulse or inclination for philosophical illumination and edification ; upon religious subjects we thought ourselves sufficiently enlightened, and so the violent strife of the French philosophers with the priesthood was to us of little concern. Books which were forbidden and condemned to the flames had no effect upon us. Of all these I will mention the "Système de la Nature,"<sup>2</sup> which we took in hand with curiosity. We couldn't understand how such a book could be dangerous. It appeared to us so gloomy, so Cimmerian, so deadly, that we could hardly endure its presence, and we shuddered before it as before a spectre. The author imagines that he specially recommends his book, when he assures us in the preface that, as a decrepit old man descending into the grave, he wishes to announce the truth to the present and future world.

We laughed at him ; we thought we had noticed that nothing which is good and worth loving is prized by old people. "Old churches have dark windows. You must ask children and sparrows how cherries and berries taste !" These were our jokes and proverbs. So this book appeared to us as the quintessence of senility, insipid, and absurd. All existed by necessity, and therefore there could be no God. But could there not also be a God by necessity ? we asked. We confessed, indeed, that we could not escape the necessities of days and nights, the seasons of the year, climatic influences, physical and animal conditions ; yet we felt within us something which seemed like complete free will, and again, something which endeavoured to place itself in equipoise with this free will.

We could not abandon the hope of becoming ever more

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<sup>1</sup> Refers to the "Sturm und Drang" movement.

<sup>2</sup> By Holbach, who was aged forty-seven at the time of its publication.

rational, and of making ourselves ever more independent of outward things, and even of ourselves. The word "freedom" sounds so beautiful that we could not dispense with it, even if it denoted an error.

None of us had read the book through, for we found ourselves disappointed in the expectation with which we had opened it. A system of nature was announced, and we hoped really to gain some information about Nature, our idol. Physics and chemistry, astronomy and geography, natural history and anatomy, together with much beside, had now for years, up to the latest day, always directed us to the great and glorious world; and we should have liked to acquire more detailed, as well as more universal knowledge of suns and stars, of planets and moons, of mountains, valleys, rivers, and seas, and all that lives and moves therein. We had no doubt that in such a treatise there must be much that the ordinary man would find injurious, the clergy dangerous, and the state inadmissible, and we hoped that this little book had endured the fiery ordeal not unworthily. But how hollow and empty did we feel in this melancholy, atheistical twilight, in which the earth vanished with all its images, the heaven with all its stars. From everlasting there was to be matter, and from everlasting it was to move hither and thither, and with this movement right and left and on all sides, without anything else to produce the endless phenomena of existence. Even with all this we should have been content, if from his matter in motion the author had built up the world before our eyes. But he knew as little of Nature as we did; for having planted out some general ideas, he at once neglects them in order to transform that which appears higher than Nature, or as a higher Nature within Nature into a material ponderous Nature, moved no doubt, but lacking both form and direction. In so doing he thought he had gained much.

If, after all, this book did us any harm, it was that we acquired an aversion from all philosophy, but particularly from metaphysics. On the other hand, we threw ourselves with all the more life and passion into living knowledge and experience, action, and poetic creation.

Thus, on the frontier of France; we got clear of and were free from everything French. Their way of life we found



too positive and aristocratic, their poetry cold, their criticism destructive, their philosophy abstruse, and yet inadequate, so that we were on the point of resigning ourselves to rude Nature, at least by way of experiment. But another influence had already for a long time prepared us for higher and freer views of the world, and for intellectual pleasures which were as true as they were poetic, and which first controlled us secretly and moderately, but afterwards ever more openly and powerfully.

I need hardly say that here Shakespeare is meant, and after I have said this, nothing further is necessary. Shakespeare is recognised by the Germans more than by any other nation, perhaps more than by his own. To him we have profusely extended all the justice, fairness, and indulgence which among ourselves we deny each other; eminent men have occupied themselves in showing his intellectual gifts in the most favourable light. I have always willingly subscribed to all that has been said in his honour, in his favour, or even by way of excuse for him. The influence of this extraordinary mind upon me I have before described,<sup>1</sup> and have attempted something with reference to his works, which has met with approval. This general acknowledgment will be sufficient till I am in a position to impart to friends, who wish to hear me, a gleanings from the reflections of his great merits, which I have been tempted to insert in this place.

At present I will only point out more closely the way in which I became acquainted with him. It happened pretty early at Leipsic by means of Dodd's "*Beauties of Shakespeare*."<sup>2</sup> Whatever may be said against such collections, which present authors in fragments, they yet produce many good effects. We are not always so collected and intellectual that we can assimilate a whole work according to its merits. Do we not underline passages in a book which have an immediate reference to ourselves? Young people particularly, who are lacking in a complete culture, are commendably aroused by brilliant passages, and so I remember, as one of the most beautiful epochs in my life, that which is characterised by the above-mentioned work. Those

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<sup>1</sup> "*Wilhelm Meister*," Book III., chapter ii.

<sup>2</sup> First published in 1753.

splendid eccentricities, the great sayings, the striking descriptions, the humorous touches, all struck me singly and powerfully.

Now appeared Wieland's translation. It was devoured, communicated, and recommended to my friends and acquaintances. We Germans had the advantage of having several important works of foreign nations translated at first in an easy and pleasant manner. Shakespeare, in prose translation, first by Wieland, then by Eschenburg, being rendered universally intelligible, and within the compass of every reader, was able to be disseminated rapidly and to produce a great effect. I honour rhythm as well as rhyme, by which poetry first becomes poetry, but the deep, basic reality, that which develops and advances us, is that which remains of the poet when he is translated into prose. Then remains the pure, perfect contents, of which, when they are absent, a dazzling external form may make a show, and when they are present, may conceal. On this account I consider, at the outset of youthful culture, that prose translations are preferable to poetical ones. It is to be observed that boys, who turn everything into sport, are pleased with the sound of the words and the cadence of the syllables, and by wantonly parodying, destroy the profound sense of the noblest work. Therefore, I make the suggestion whether a prose translation of Homer might not next be undertaken, but it must be worthy of the stage which the German literature has now reached. I leave this and what precedes it to the consideration of our worthy pedagogues, whose wide experience in this matter stands at their disposal. In favour of my proposal, I will only mention Luther's translation of the Bible. For this excellent man in rendering into our mother tongue, as if all were in one mould, a work composed in most different styles, with its poetical, historical, commanding, and teaching spirit, advanced religion more than if he had endeavoured to imitate the peculiarities of the original in detail. In vain an effort has been made to translate the Book of Job, the Psalms, and other poems in a poetic form for our enjoyment. For the multitude, who are to be influenced, a simple translation is always the best. Those critical translations which rival the original, serve really only for the entertainment of the learned with one another. Thus in our Strasburg society Shakespeare,

translated and in the original, by fragments and as a whole, by passages and quotations, influenced us, so that as one has men deeply versed in the Bible, so did we gradually become deeply versed in Shakespeare, we imitated in our conversation the virtues and weaknesses of his time, with which he made us acquainted. In his quibbles<sup>1</sup> we took the greatest pleasure, and by translating them, nay, with original wantonness, vied with him. To this the great enthusiasm with which I had taken hold of him contributed not a little. A joyous confession that something higher hovered above me infected my friends, who yielded themselves to the same opinion. We did not deny the possibility of knowing such merits more closely, of grasping them, and of judging them with insight, but this we reserved for later epochs. For the present, we wanted only to sympathise joyfully and to imitate in a living fashion; in so great an enjoyment we did not think of scrutinising and finding fault with the man who gave it to us, but we chose rather to reverence him unconditionally.

Whoever wishes to know directly what was at that time thought, said, and done in this lively society, let him read Herder's essay on Shakespeare in the pamphlet on German manner and art ("Über Deutsche Art und Kunst"); further, Lenz's remarks on the theatre,<sup>2</sup> to which was added a translation of "Love's Labour's Lost." Herder penetrates into the depth of Shakespeare's being, and exhibits it admirably; Lenz conducts himself more like an iconoclast against the traditions of the theatre, and will have everything everywhere treated in the Shakespearian manner. Since I have mentioned this gifted and eccentric man, this is the occasion for trying to say something about him. I got to know him towards the end of my stay at Strasburg. We saw each other but seldom, his society was not the same as mine, but we endeavoured to meet one another, and liked to converse with one another, because as young men and contemporaries we held the same views. He was small, but of a neat build, a most charming head, the delicate form of which completely corresponded with his dainty if somewhat blunted features; blue eyes,

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<sup>1</sup> This English word is used in the original.

<sup>2</sup> Published in 1774 without the name of the author.

fair hair, in short, such a person as I have often met among Northern youths ; a gentle, at the same time cautious gait, an agreeable but not quite fluent speech, and a demeanour varying between reserve and shyness, which is very becoming in a young man. Little poems, especially his own, he read aloud very well, and wrote a flowing hand. His way of thinking could only be characterised by the English word "whimsical," which, as the dictionary explains, combinès many oddities in one idea. Perhaps, therefore, no one was better fitted than he to appreciate and imitate the extravagances and exuberances of Shakespeare's genius. To this the translation mentioned above bears witness. He treats his author with great freedom, is everything but literally faithful, yet he knows so well how to assume the armour, or rather the motley, of his predecessor, to imitate his gestures so humorously, that he is certain of gaining the praise of all those who take pleasure in such things.

The absurdities of the clowns were our especial delight, and we regarded Lenz as a most favoured man, when he thus succeeded in that epitaph of the deer shot by the princess :—

1 " Die schöne Prinzessin schoss und traf  
Eines jungen Hirschleins Leben ;  
Es fiel dahin in Schweren Schlaf  
Und wird ein Brätlein geben.  
Der Jagdhund boll ! Ein L zu Hirsch  
So wird es denn ein Hirschel ;  
Doch setz ein Römesch L zu Hirsch  
So macht es funfzig Hirsche drans  
Schreib Hirschell mit zwei Llen."

The liking for the absurd, which shows itself freely in youth and without restraint, but afterwards withdraws more

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<sup>1</sup> The lines of Shakespeare, of which the above is a very free translation by Lenz, are :—

"The preylful princess pierc'd and prick'd a pretty pleasing pricket ;  
Some say, a sore ; but not a sore, till now made sore with shooting.  
The dogs did yell ; put l to sore, then sorel jumps from thicket ;  
Or pricket, sore, or else sorel ; the people fall a hooting.  
If sore be sore, or else sorel, then L to sore makes fifty sores ; O sore L !  
Of one sore I an hundred make, by adding but one more L."

"Love's Labour's Lost"—(Act iv., Scene 2).

into the background, without being lost altogether, was in full bloom amongst us, and we endeavoured by original jokes to do honour to our great master. We felt very grand when we could lay before the society something of that sort, which was in any degree approved, as, for example, the following on a riding-master, who had come to harm on a wild horse :—

“ A rider in this house doth dwell,  
 He is likewise a master,  
 Put both of these together well,  
 We have a riding-master.  
 Master of riding he for aye,  
 With right the name he boasts him,  
 Riding with master runaway,  
 Alack ! what grief that cost him.”

About these things we seriously disputed whether they were worthy of the clown or not, whether they flowed from the true, pure fountain of folly, or had in some improper and inadmissible manner mixed in some sense and understanding. But these whimsicalities spread universally and all the more vehemently, and so more were disposed to take part in it, because Lessing, who possessed the greatest confidence, had given the first signal for them in his “*Dramaturgie*.”

In a society of such a mood and so excited, I had many a pleasant expedition to upper Alsace, whence, on this very account, I brought back no particular edification. The numerous little verses which poured from us on each occasion, and which could form a lively book of travels, are all lost. In the cloister of the abbey of Molsheim we admired the paintings of the stained windows, in the fruitful region between Colmar and Schlettstatt echoed comic hymns to Ceres, while the consumption of so many fruits was minutely analysed and lauded. Also we took up in a very festive manner the important controversy concerning free and restricted trade<sup>1</sup> in these same fruits. At Ensheim we saw the immense aerolite hanging up in the church, and jested in accordance with the scepticism of that time at the

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<sup>1</sup> This question was much debated in France since the publication of the famous work of Ferdinando Galiani, 1769.

credulity of men, for foreseeing that such air-borne creatures, if they were not to fall on our own fields, were at least to be preserved in our own cabinets.

I still think with pleasure on an excursion to the Ottilienberg, which took place with a hundred, or rather a thousand, true believers. Here, where the foundations of a Roman fortification were still remaining, the beautiful daughter of a count was said to have made her abode, from pious inclination, among ruins and in the depths of the rock. Not far from the chapel, where wanderers edify themselves, one is shown her spring, and many charming things are related about it. The picture which I formed of her, and also her name, were deeply impressed upon me. For long I carried both of them about with me, till at last one of my later but not less-loved daughters,<sup>1</sup> who was received with favour by pure and pious hearts, was endowed with it.

On this height also the splendid Alsace is repeated before the eye, always the same, and always new. Just as in the amphitheatre, wherever we take our place we see the whole crowd, only our neighbours most clearly, so is it here with thickets, rocks, hills, woods, fields, meadows, and districts, both near and in the distance. On the horizon they would even show us Basle also ; I will not swear that we saw it, but the distant blue of the Swiss mountains exercised even here its right over us, drawing us to itself, and, as we could not follow the impulse, leaving behind a painful feeling.

To such distraction and amusements I gave myself over all the more and, indeed, even to intoxication, as my passionate relationship to Frederica now began to cause me anxiety. Such a youthful attachment, fostered at random, is to be compared with a bomb cast at night time. It rises in a soft, shining line, mingles with the stars, indeed, for a moment seems to linger among them, then downwards describes the same course, only reversed, and where its course is ended brings destruction. Frederica remained always like herself. She appeared not to think, and not to wish to think, that this relationship could soon end. Olivia, on the other hand,

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<sup>1</sup> By "daughter" he means Ottilie, one of the characters in the "Elective Affinities."

who also missed me very unwillingly, but did not lose so much as her sister, had more foresight or more openness. She often spoke with me about my probable departure, and tried to console herself and her sister upon it. A girl who gives up a man to whom she does not deny her partiality is far from being in the painful condition in which a youth finds himself who has gone so far in his declarations towards a lady. He always cuts a poor figure, for from him, one on the point of becoming a man, is expected a certain understanding of his situation, and a decided levity will not suit him. The reasons of a girl who draws back in such a case always appear valid, but those of a man, never.

But how can a flattering passion let us foresee whither it can lead us? For even when we, with the clearest understanding, have renounced it, we cannot yet be free from it; we get pleasure from the dear habit, even if it is to be in a different way. So it was in my case. Though the presence of Frederica caused me pain, I knew nothing more delightful than when absent to think about her and about myself conversing with her. I visited her less frequently, but our correspondence on that account became more lively. She understood how to make her circumstances real to me with cheerfulness, and her feelings with delicacy, and so I called up before my soul her fine qualities in the favourable light of passion. Absence made me free, and my whole attachment first bloomed into perfect flower through this distant intercourse. In such moments I could entirely blind myself as to the future; I was sufficiently distracted by the passing of time and by pressing occupation. Hitherto, I had made it possible to accomplish the most varied things, by means of an ever-lively interest in what was present and momentary, but towards the end all crowded violently and confusedly together, as is always wont to be the case when one has to take leave of a place.

Yet another incident took away the last days of my visit. I happened to be in important society at a country house, from which there was a splendid view of the front side of the cathedral and of the tower which rises above it. "It is a pity," said some one, "that the whole is not completed and that we have only one tower." I replied: "I am equally sorry not to see this tower quite completed, for the four volutes end much too abruptly. There ought to be four light spires

in addition, as well as a higher one in the middle, where the clumsy cross now stands."

As I made this assertion with my usual liveliness, an animated little man addressed me and asked : " Who has told you that ? " " The tower itself," I answered. " I have observed it so long and so attentively, and shown it so much affection, that at last it determined to confess to me this open secret." " It has not informed you wrongly," he answered. " I am best able to know it, for I am the superintendent in charge of the public buildings. In our archives we have still the original designs, which say the same thing, and I can show you them." On account of my early departure I pressed for the speedy performance of this favour. He allowed me to see the priceless parchments ; I hastily drew on oiled paper the spires which were wanting in the execution of the building, and regretted that I had not been earlier informed of this treasure. But so it always happened with me, by observation and reflection, laboriously to arrive at a conception of things, which perhaps would not have been so striking and fruitful if it had been delivered to me by others.

In such oppression and confusion I could not refrain from seeing Frederica once more. Those were painful days, whose memory has not remained with me. As I reached her my hand from horseback, tears stood in her eyes, and I was heavy at heart. Now I rode along the footpath to Drusenheim, and there came over me one of the strangest forebodings. I saw myself, not with the eye of the body but with that of the mind, coming along again the same way on horseback, in a dress such as I had never worn ; it was light grey mixed with gold. As soon as I roused myself from this dream, the form had completely vanished. Strange it is, however, that eight years afterwards, I found myself on the same way to visit Frederica once more, and in the costume of my dream, which I wore by chance, and not from choice. However it may be with these things generally, this strange phantom in those moments of parting gave me some consolation. The pain of leaving for ever the magnificent Alsace with all that I had acquired in it was softened, and I found myself, when I had escaped from the excitement of saying good-bye, fairly calm on a peaceful and inspiring journey.

When I arrived at Mannheim I hastened with the greatest



curiosity to see the Hall of Antiquities, which was very famous. Already at Leipsic, on the occasion of the writings of Winckelmann and Lessing, I had heard much said of those important works of Art, but had never seen them, for apart from the Laocoon (the Father), and the Faun with the cymbals, there were no casts at the university, and what Oeser liked to say with these statues as his text was enigmatic enough. But how can one give to beginners a conception of the end of Art? Verschaffeldt, the director, received me in a friendly way. One of his assistants led me into the hall; after he had opened it, he left me to my inclinations and reflections. Here I stood now, exposed to the most wondrous impressions, in a spacious, quadrangular hall, whose extraordinary height made it almost a cube; it was well lighted above by windows under the cornice. The most splendid statues of antiquity, arranged not only along the walls, but also placed over the whole floor; a forest of statues, through which one had to wind one's way, a great ideal assemblage, which one had to press through. All these splendid forms could be set in the most advantageous light by raising and dropping their curtains, besides they were movable on their pedestals, and could be turned and changed at pleasure.

After I had for some time experienced the first effect of this irresistible mass, I turned to those forms which most attracted me, and who can deny that the Apollo Belvedere, by the moderation of its colossal size, its slender shape, its free movement, its conquering glance, carries off the victory before all others? Then I turned to the Laocoon, which I here saw for the first time in connection with his sons. I represented to myself, as well as possible, what had been discussed and disputed about it, and sought for my own point of view, but I was drawn now here, now there. The Dying Gladiator held me fast for a long time, but to the group of Castor and Pollux, that precious though problematical relic, I have to thank for the most blessed moments. I did not yet know how impossible it is to give at once an account of a sight so full of pleasure. I compelled myself to reflect, and so little as I could succeed in arriving at any kind of clearness, I yet felt that every individual of this great assembled mass was comprehensible, that each object had a natural significance of its own.

My greatest attention was nevertheless directed to the Laocoon, and I decided for myself the famous question, why he does not cry out, by saying to myself he cannot cry out. All the actions and movements of the three figures proceeded, as I thought, from the first conception of the group. The position of the main figure, as powerful as it is skilfully managed, was composed of two motives, the struggle against the snakes, and the attempt to escape the instantaneous bite. To lessen the pain of this the abdomen must be contracted and crying aloud made impossible. So I decided, too, that the younger son was not bitten, and I endeavoured to explain to myself the artistic qualities of this group. I wrote a letter to Oeser about it, but he did not attach much importance to my interpretation, but replied to my good will with a general encouragement. But I was fortunate enough to retain firmly that idea, and to let it rest quietly by me for several years, till at last it united itself with my whole experiences and convictions, in which connection I published it in the "Propylaea."<sup>1</sup>

After the enthusiastic contemplation of so many sublime sculptures, I was not to be deprived of a foretaste of antique architecture. I found the cast of the capital of the Rotunda, and I do not deny that at the sight of those immense and elegant acanthus leaves my belief in the northern architecture began somewhat to waver.

This early sight of the great collection, which influenced me all my life, had, however, for the immediate future little result. How gladly with this exhibition would I have commenced a book, instead of ending with it; for scarcely had the door of the glorious hall been closed behind me than I wished to recover myself, and endeavoured to banish from my imagination those forms as being injurious. And now it was only after a long roundabout way that I could be brought back into this circle. Meanwhile, the silent fruitfulness of such impressions is quite priceless, when they are appropriated to oneself and enjoyed without a distracting judgment. Youth is capable of this highest happiness, if it will not be critical, but let what is good and excellent influence it without examination and analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> A journal of art which Goethe edited.

## BOOK XII

THE wanderer had now at last arrived at home healthier and more cheerful than the first time, but in his whole being there was something overstrained, which did not indicate complete mental health. At the very beginning I was the cause of my mother having to regulate and smooth out events into a certain medium between my father's legal love of order and my manifold eccentricity. At Mainz, a boy, who played the harp, had pleased me so well that I invited him to Frankfort, because the fair was close at hand, and promised to give him shelter and to assist him. On this occasion there came forward that peculiarity of mine which has cost me so much in my life ; I mean the liking to see young people collected around me and united to me. By this means, indeed, I ended by being burdened with their fortunes. One unpleasant experience after another has not been able to free me from the inborn propensity, which even now, in spite of the clearest conviction, from time to time threatens to lead me into error. My mother, more clear sighted than I, foresaw how strange it would appear to my father that a musical vagabond should go forth from so respectable a house to earn his bread at inns and drinking taverns ; therefore she provided board and lodging for him in the neighbourhood. I commended him to my friends, and so the child was not badly off. Some years after I saw him again, when he had become bigger and more clumsy, without having improved much in his art. My excellent mother, perfectly content with the first attempt at smoothing things over and concealing them, did not think that she had any immediate need of this art. My father, with his antiquated hobbies and occupations, leading a peaceful life, was in an agreeable mood, like one who is carrying through his plans in spite of all hindrances and postponements. I had now taken my degree, and the first step to the further advancement of my

civic course had been made. My thesis met with his approval; he was occupied with the closer consideration of the same, and in many preparations for its future publication. During my stay in Alsace I had written many short poems, essays, descriptions of travel, and several pamphlets. It interested him to put them into chapters, to arrange them, and to demand from me their completion, and he was delighted in the expectation that my invincible dislike to seeing any of these things in print would disappear. My sister had gathered round her a circle of intelligent and charming women. Without being domineering, she dominated over all, because her intelligence could take a wide view, and her good will understood how to smooth over many things; but above all she was ready to play the part of confidante rather than of rival. Among my old friends and acquaintances I found Horn an unchangeable, loyal friend, and a cheerful companion. I also became intimate with Riese, who never failed to practice on and test my acumen, while by persistent contradiction he offered doubt and negation to a dogmatic enthusiasm into which I too easily fell. Others, whom I will mention later, gradually entered this circle, but among those who rendered my new sojourn in my native city pleasant and profitable, the brothers Schlosser stood first. The elder, Hieronymus, a profound and finished lawyer, enjoyed a universal confidence as legal adviser. His most cherished abode was among his books and papers in his chambers, where the most perfect order reigned. There I have always found him cheerful and communicative. In a larger society also he showed himself agreeable and entertaining, for by extensive reading his mind was adorned with all the beauty of the ancient world. He did not disdain, occasionally, by witty Latin poems to increase our social amusements; and I still possess several joking couplets which he had written under some portraits drawn by me of strange and generally well-known Frankfort caricatures. Often I asked his advice about my career in life and business which was then commencing, and had not a hundred inclinations, passions, and distractions hurried me out of that path, he would have been my safest guide.

His brother George, who had returned once more from Treptow, from the service of Duke Eugene of Württemberg,

was nearer my own age. Well advanced in knowledge of the world and practical talent, he was also not defective in his acquaintance with German and foreign literature. He wrote, as formerly, with readiness in all languages, but in this respect he no longer stimulated me, because I devoted myself exclusively to German, and only cultivated the others so far as to be able to read in some degree the best authors in the original. His integrity was always the same, his acquaintance with the world had made him stand more firmly, even obstinately upon his well-meaning convictions.

By these two friends I was soon made acquainted with Merck,<sup>1</sup> to whom Herder, from Strasburg, had given me no unfavourable recommendation. This singular man, who had the greatest influence on my life, was born in Darmstadt. Of his early education I have but little to say. After the completion of his studies he accompanied a young man to Switzerland, where he remained for a time, and came back married. When I became acquainted with him he was military paymaster at Darmstadt. Endowed by nature with wit and understanding, he had acquired very fine knowledge, especially in modern literature, and had looked round on the history of the world and mankind in all times and all countries. A sure and keen judgment was natural to him. He was prized as a good and decided man of business, and a skilful accountant. He easily made himself at home everywhere, as a most pleasant man of society for those to whom he was not made alarming by his mordant wit. He was tall and slenderly built, and was remarkable for a prominent pointed nose and light blue, it may be grey, eyes, which gave to his quick attentive glance something tigerish. Lavater's "Physiognomy" has preserved his profile. In his character there was a wonderful contradiction. By nature a good, noble, reliable man, he had embittered himself against the world, and let this whimsical humour work in him so far that he felt an invincible inclination to be intentionally a knave or even a villain. Sensible, calm, and kindly in one moment, in the next it might occur to him—as the snail puts forth its horns—to do something

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<sup>1</sup> 1741-91. One of the most interesting characters of the "Sturm und Drang" period, committed suicide at the age of fifty.

which would pain, vex, or even injure another. Yet as there is pleasure in going about with something dangerous, when one feels safe from it, so I had a great inclination to live with him and enjoy his peculiarities, as a confident feeling assured me that he would never turn his bad side against me. As he now, by this morally restless spirit, by this necessity for treating men maliciously and spitefully, on the one side destroyed social life, another form of disquietude, which he fostered within himself, opposed his inward satisfaction. He felt in a dilettante fashion an impulse to write, to which he was all the more inclined, as he expressed himself with ease and felicity in prose and verse, and could well attempt to play a part among the *beaux esprits* of that time. I still possess some poetic epistles of his, of uncommon boldness, conciseness, and with a gall worthy of Swift, which were highly distinguished by original views of persons and things, but written with such destructive power that I could not publish them at present, but must either destroy them or preserve them for posterity, as striking evidences of the secret dissensions in our literature. The fact, indeed, that he always went to work in all his labours in a spirit of negation and destruction was disagreeable to himself, and he often declared that he envied me my innocent love of representing things which arose from delight in both the model and the copy. In other respects his literary dilettantism would have brought him profit rather than harm, if he had not felt an irresistible impulse to enter upon the technical and mercantile department. For when he once began to curse his faculties, he was beside himself because he could not sufficiently satisfy his demands on a talent which needed practice, so he laid aside now the plastic and now the poetic arts and worked at manufacturing commercial undertakings, which were to bring him in money while they afforded him amusement.

There was besides at Darmstadt a society of highly cultivated men. Privy Councillor Von Hess, who was the Minister of the Landgrave, Professor Petersen, Rector Wenk, and others, were the initiated whose worth attracted many strangers from neighbouring parts, and many travellers who were passing through. The wife of the Privy Councillor and her sister, Fräulein Flachsland, were ladies of exceptional merits and talents. The latter was the fiancée of Herder ;

she was doubly interesting through her own character and her attachment to so superior a man.

I cannot say how much the circle animated and advanced me. They liked to listen to the reading aloud of my finished works, or those I had begun ; they encouraged me when I related to them openly and in detail what I intended to do, and they scolded me when on every fresh occasion I laid aside what I had before begun. "Faust" was already advanced, "Götz Von Berlichingen" was gradually forming itself in my mind, the study of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries occupied me, and the cathedral had left behind in me a very serious impression, which could form an appropriate background for such poems. I wrote out what I had thought and fancied about architecture. The first thing on which I insisted was that it should be called German and not Gothic, and should be regarded as native and not foreign ; the second that it should not be compared with the architecture of the Greeks and Romans, because it arose from an entirely different principle. In the latter, because under a more favourable sky the roof was allowed to rest on pillars, a broken wall came spontaneously. But we, who must protect ourselves against the weather and everywhere surround ourselves with walls, should honour the genius, who found the means of giving variety to massive walls, of apparently breaking them through, and of occupying the eye in a worthy and pleasing way on the broad surface. The same held good of the towers, which do not, like domes, imitate a heaven within, but strive towards heaven without, and are to announce far and wide to the country round about the existence of the sanctuary which lies at their base. The interior of these sacred buildings I only ventured to touch on in poetic contemplation and in a pious frame of mind.

Had I chosen to set out these views, whose worth I will not deny, clearly and distinctly in an intelligible style, my pamphlet, entitled "German Architecture, D. M.<sup>1</sup> Ervini a Steinbach," would have had a much greater effect when I published it, and would sooner have gained the attention of our native friends of Art. But, led astray by the example of Hamann and Herder, I concealed these quite simple thoughts and reflections in a dusty cloud of

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<sup>1</sup> *Diis manibus.*

peculiar words and phrases, and darkened the light which had arisen within me both for myself and others. Nevertheless these papers were well received, and reprinted in Herder's book on "German Manner and Art."

If now, partly from inclination, partly from poetic and other objects, I busied myself with great pleasure in the antiquities of our native land, and endeavoured to render them present to my mind, I was also turned away from these objects from time to time by Biblical studies and religious sympathies; for the life and deeds of Luther, which shine out so splendidly in the sixteenth century, of necessity led me constantly back to the Holy Scriptures and to the consideration of religious feelings and opinions. To regard the Bible as composed of fragments, as having arisen gradually and from time to time as having been elaborated, flattered my small conceit, since this way of thinking was by no means the prevailing one, still less was it accepted in the circle in which I lived. As regards the general sense, I kept to Luther's expression; but in particulars, I had recourse to Schmidt's literal translation, and endeavoured in using it to profit by my little Hebrew knowledge as much as possible. That there are contradictions to be found in the Bible no one will deny. These one sought to reconcile by taking the clearest passage for the basis, and endeavouring to work into the same significance, the contradictory, less clear parts. I, on the other hand, wished to find out, by examination, which passage best expressed the sense of the matter, and rejected the rest as interpolated.

Already at that time I had become confirmed in a fundamental opinion, without being able to say whether it had been imparted to me or excited in me by others, or had arisen from my own reflections. It was this, that in everything which is handed down to us, especially in writing, it is a question of the basis, the internal character, the sense, the direction of the work; here lies the original, the divine, the effective, the intact, the indestructible, and no time, no outward influence or condition can get the better of this inner primeval nature, at least not more than disease of the body can get the better of a well-cultivated soul. Thus language, dialect, peculiarities, style, and finally writing are to be regarded as the body of a spiritual work; this body, however nearly related with the inner



essence, is exposed to deterioration and destruction. Thus, then, no tradition can be given quite pure according to its nature, and if it could be given quite purely, in the passage of time it would not be completely intelligible. This must be so owing to the inadequacy of the organs by which it is delivered, owing to the difference of the times and places, but especially owing to the difference of human capacities and modes of thought. Wherefore, interpreters are never able to agree.

The internal and essential element of a writing, especially if it interests us, we ought to seek for, and at the same time before all things to consider its relation to what is within ourselves, and how far by its vitality our own is animated and fertilised ; on the other hand, everything that is external, which has no influence upon us or is subject to doubt, is to be given over to criticism, which, if it is in a position to dislocate and split up the whole, it could never succeed in robbing us of that real ground to which we hold fast, nor make us for a moment doubtful about the confidence in it which we have once acquired.

This conviction, arising from faith and sight, which in all cases we recognise for the most important, applicable, and invigorating, lies at the base of the moral as well as the literary edifice of my life, and is to be regarded as a well-invested and richly productive capital, though in some instances we may be misled into a mistaken use of it. By this conception the Bible first became really accessible to me. I had several times run through it, as is done in the religious instruction of Protestants, and by leaps, as it were, had made myself acquainted with it from beginning to end and back again. The blunt naturalness of the Old Testament and the delicate *naïveté* of the New had attracted me in particular instances ; yet, on the whole, I had never quite come to terms with them, but the different characters of the different books no longer caused me confusion ; I knew how to represent to myself their significance in its true order, and, above all, became so much attached to this book that I could never again do without it. From this very attachment I was protected against all sneering contempt, because I at once saw its dishonesty. I not only detested it, but could get into a rage about it, and I remember perfectly that in my childish fanaticism I could have throttled Voltaire

if I could have got hold of him on account of his "Saul." Every kind of honest investigation, on the other hand, gave me great satisfaction. The explanations of Eastern localities and costumes, which spread more light on the Book, I received with pleasure, and continued to exercise all my acumen on these valuable traditions.

I have already explained how I endeavoured to initiate myself into the conditions of the primeval world, which is described for us in the first book of Moses. As I now intended to proceed step by step in an orderly fashion, after a long interruption I took up the second book. But what a difference ! As the freshness of childhood had vanished from my life, so I found the second book separated from the first by an immense chasm. The absolute forgetfulness of past time is expressed in these few significant words. "Now there arose a king in Egypt, who knew not Joseph." But the nation, too, countless as the stars of heaven, had almost forgotten the ancestor to whom Jehovah, under the starry heaven, had made this promise, which was now accomplished. I worked with unspeakable toil, with inadequate aids and powers, through the five books, and came there-with upon the strangest ideas. I thought that I had discovered that it was not our ten commandments which were written on the tables, and that the Israelites had wandered in the wilderness, not for forty years, but only for a short time ; and so I imagined that I could give quite new explanations of the character of Moses.

Even the New Testament was not safe from my investigations ; with my passion for analysis<sup>1</sup> I did not spare it, but from love and affection I agreed with that health-giving saying : "The evangelists may contradict each other if only the Gospel does not contradict itself." In this region I thought I made all kinds of discoveries. That gift of tongues at Pentecost imparted so openly and clearly I interpreted to myself in an abstruse manner, not calculated to procure for itself many disciples. I endeavoured to fix myself on one of the main doctrines of the Lutheran creed, to which the Moravian brotherhood had given a keener edge, namely, that of regarding what is sinful as predominant in man, but in this I was not particularly successful. Yet I had made

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<sup>1</sup> Of the individual elements which make up the New Testament.

the terminology of this doctrine pretty well my own, and made use of the same in a letter which I had published under the guise of a country clergyman to a new brother in that office. The main theme of this letter was the watchword of that time, namely, "Tolerance," which prevailed among the best minds and spirits.

Such things, which were produced by degrees, I had printed at my own expense in the following year ; in order to make a trial of the public. I gave them away or handed them over to Eichenberg's bookstore,<sup>1</sup> in order to sell them off as well as possible without any profit accruing to myself. Here and there a review took notice of them, sometimes favourably, sometimes unfavourably, yet they disappeared at once. My father carefully preserved them in his archives, otherwise I should not possess a copy. I shall add them, as well as some things of the kind which I have found and not yet printed, to the new edition of my works.

Since it was through Hamann<sup>2</sup> that I was guided to the Sibylline<sup>3</sup> style of these writings and to the publication of the same, this seems a suitable place for speaking of this worthy and influential man, who for us at that time was so great a mystery as he has ever remained for his native country. His "Socratic Memorabilia" excited notice, and were specially liked by such persons as could not reconcile themselves with the dazzling spirit of the time. He was felt to be a deep-thinking, profound man, who, accurately acquainted with the outer world and literature, yet attached importance to something mysterious and incomprehensible, and expressed himself about it in a manner peculiar to himself. By those who at that time dominated the literature of the day, he was indeed regarded as an abstruse enthusiast, but youth, with its aspirations, was attracted by him. Even the "Quiet in the Land," as they were called, half in jest, half in earnest, those pious souls who, without acknowledging any society, formed an invisible church, turned their attention to him ; and for my friend Fräulein von Klettenberg, not less than for her friend Moser, the Magus of the North, was a welcome apparition. They were the more disposed to a relationship with him, when they

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<sup>1</sup> In Frankfort.

<sup>2</sup> 1730-88.

<sup>3</sup> So-called from their obscure, oracular style.

knew that he, though troubled by contracted domestic circumstances, understood how to maintain this beautiful and lofty way of thinking. It would have been easy for President von Moser, with his great influence, to procure a tolerably comfortable existence for a man of such frugal habits. The matter was introduced, and they went so far in their mutual understanding, that Hamann undertook the long journey from Königsberg to Darmstadt. But as the President chanced to be absent, the eccentric man, for what reason is not known, turned back again, though they still continued in friendly correspondence by letters. I still possess two letters of the Königsberg philosopher to his patron, which testify to the extraordinary greatness and sincerity of their author.

But so good an understanding was not to last long. These pious people had thought him pious after their own fashion ; they had treated him with reverence as the Magus of the North, and believed that he would show himself with a reverend demeanour. But he had already given them a shock in the "Clouds," an afterpiece of "Socratic Memorabilia." He now published the "Crusades of the Philologist," on the title-page of which not only was the goat's profile of a horned Pan to be seen, but also on one of the first pages there was a woodcut of a large cock beating time for some young cockerels that stood before him with notes in their claws, on which certain pieces of church music, which the author did not like, were satirically written ; thus there arose among the more sensitive-minded a feeling of displeasure which was communicated to the writer, who was not edified by it, but withdrew himself from a more intimate union. Herder, however, who was in correspondence with his bride and ourselves, kept our attention towards him alive, and at once communicated to us everything which proceeded from that remarkable mind. Among these belonged his reviews and notices inserted in the *Königsberg Gazette*, all of which had a most peculiar character. I possess nearly a complete collection of his writings, and a very important treatise in manuscript on Herder's prize essay upon the "Origin of Language," in which, in the most peculiar way, he illuminates this specimen of Herder's genius, with strange flashes of strong lights.

I do not abandon the hope of either supervising myself

a publication of Hamann's work,<sup>1</sup> or at least assisting in it ; when these important documents are brought before the eye of the public, it will be a suitable occasion for speaking more intimately about the nature and genius of their author. Meanwhile, I will here contribute something about him, all the more as there are still some superior men living who had an affection for him, and whose agreement or criticism of what I have to say will be most welcome to me. The principle to which all Hamann's utterances can be reduced is this : " Everything that man undertakes to perform, whether by deed, or word, or otherwise, must arise from all his powers united together ; everything in isolation is worthless." A splendid maxim, but difficult to follow. In life and art it may well apply ; on the other hand, in every deliverance by speech, which is not quite poetic, there is a great difficulty, for words must be detached and individualised in order to say or signify anything. A man, when he speaks, must for the moment be one-sided. There is no communication, no instruction, without separation. But since, now, Hamann always opposed this separation, and as he felt, imagined, and thought in a unity, and wished to speak in the same manner, and demanded the same from others, he came into conflict with his own style and with all which others could produce. In order to accomplish the impossible, he reached after all elements, the deepest and most secret contemplation in which nature and spirit have hidden meetings, illuminating flashes of understanding, which shine forth from such a contact, significant images which hover in these regions, vigorous aphorisms from sacred and profane writers, and everything humorous which could be added ; all this constituted the wonderful whole of his style, of his communications. If one cannot accompany him in his depths, wander with him upon his heights, master the forms which float before him, find out the exact meaning of passages only hinted at from an infinitely diffuse literature, there will only be an increase of gloom and darkness the more we study him, and this obscurity will always increase with years, because his allusions were chiefly directed to definite peculiarities

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<sup>1</sup> This was accomplished in 1821 by Roth, supported by Goethe and F. H. Jacobi.

in life and literature which have only a momentary predominance. In my collection there are several of his printed papers, on the margin of which the passages to which his allusions are made are cited in his own hand. On opening them one finds an ambiguous double light, which to us seems most agreeable ; we must, however, throughout renounce what is ordinarily termed understanding. Such works therefore deserve to be called Sibylline, for the reason that they cannot be considered in and for themselves, but one must await an opportunity for having recourse to their oracles. Every time we open them we think we find something new, because the indwelling meaning of each passage touches and affects us in a varying way. I never saw him personally or had any immediate relation with him through letters. He appears to me to have been most transparent in all the relations of life and friendship, and to have felt very rightly the ties of men to one another, and to himself. All the letters of his which I saw were excellent, and much clearer than his writings, because in the former the relation to time and circumstances, as well as to personal conditions, stood out more distinctly. Nevertheless, I thought I saw thus much, namely, that he, feeling in the most naïve manner the superiority of his intellectual gifts, always considered himself wiser and cleverer than his correspondent, whom he met in an ironic rather than a friendly manner. If this only occurred in individual cases, yet they were for me the majority, and that is the reason why I never desired to have closer relations with him.

On the other hand, between Herder and ourselves an agreeable literary intercourse was carried on in a lively manner, only it was a pity that he could not be kept quiet and fair. But Herder never stopped his bantering and scolding. It did not require much to irritate Merck, and then he managed to get me into a state of impatience. As Herder, among all writers, appeared to honour Swift the most, he was always called among ourselves the "Dean," and this again gave rise to all kinds of mistakes and vexations.

In spite of all this, we were very much pleased to know that he was to be installed at Bückeberg, which brought him a double honour, for his new patron had won the highest reputation as a man of insight and bravery, and also

of eccentricity. Thomas Abt<sup>1</sup> had become well known and famous in this service, his country lamented him, and was pleased with the monument which his patron had raised for him. Now Herder was to fulfil in the place of the prematurely deceased all those expectations which his predecessor had so worthily excited.

The period at which this happened gave to such an appointment double distinction and value, for several German princes followed the example of Count von Lippe by taking into their service not only men who were learned and capable at business, but also men of intellect who promised much. It was said that Klopstock had been appointed by the Margrave, Charles of Baden, not exactly for the purpose of business, but so as to communicate by his presence grace and help to the higher society. And as in consequence the esteem of this excellent prince increased, who bestowed his attention on all that was useful and beautiful, so the respect for Klopstock grew not a little. Everything which issued from him was loved and valued. We copied out with care his odes and elegies so that each one of us should have a copy of them. For this reason we were greatly delighted when the great Landgravine, Carolina of Hesse Darmstadt,<sup>2</sup> arranged for a collection of the same, and one of the few copies came into our possession, which put us in a position to complete the collection we had written out with our own hands. Hence those first readings have long been most cherished by us ; indeed, we have often been enlivened and rejoiced by poems which the author afterwards rejected. So true is it, that the life which flows forth from a beautiful soul has all the freer influence the less it seems to have been worked up into a thing of art by means of criticism.

Klopstock, by his character and conduct, had succeeded in procuring attention and respect for himself and other men of talent. Now they had to thank him, as far as possible, for the security and improvement of their domestic condition. The book trade in earlier times dealt mainly in important, scientific, professional works, and in stock publications which were only moderately remunerated. But the production

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<sup>1</sup> Admirer and imitator of Lessing.

<sup>2</sup> 1721-74. A great admirer of Frederick the Great, and devoted to the French language.

of poetical works was looked upon as something sacred, and it was held almost as bad as simony to receive a remuneration for them or to enhance it. Author and publisher stood in the strangest reciprocal relations. Both appeared, according to one's point of view, as patrons and clients. The former were regarded and honoured by the public for their talent as men of high moral education ; they had an intellectual rank, and felt themselves rewarded by the success of their work. The latter were content with the second place, and found a considerable profit in it. But now their wealth placed them above the poor poet, and thus everything stood in the finest equilibrium. Mutual magnanimity and gratitude were not uncommon. Breitkopf and Gottsched lived together all their lives as inmates of the same house. Niggardliness and meanness, especially of the piratical printers, were not yet in vogue.

Nevertheless a general stir now arose among German authors. They compared their own moderate, if not wretched condition, with the riches of the well-recognised booksellers. They considered how great was the fame of a Gellert, of a Rabener, and in what straitened domestic circumstances a German writer, though universally beloved, must live if he cannot make his life easy by any other way of earning money. Even the mediocre and lesser minds felt a lively desire for the improvement of their position and of making themselves independent of the publishers.

At this time Klopstock came forward and offered his "Learned Republic" ("Die Deutsche Gelehrten Republik") for subscription. Although the later cantos of the "Messiah," partly on account of their contents, partly on account of their method of treatment, could not have the effect which the earlier ones had, which came pure and innocent into a pure and innocent time, yet the regard for the poet remains ever the same, who, by the publication of his odes, had drawn to himself the hearts, minds, and spirits of many persons. Many friendly men, among them some of great influence, offered to secure payment beforehand, which was fixed at a *Louis d'or*. The object, it was said, was not so much to pay for the book, as by this opportunity to reward the author for his services to his country. Every one crowded up for the purpose ; even young men and maidens, who had not much to spend, opened up their



saving boxes ; men and women, the upper and middle classes, contributed to this sacred expenditure, and perhaps there were altogether a thousand subscribers who paid in advance. Expectation was strained to the utmost, and the confidence of the public was as great as possible. After this the book, on its appearance, met with the strangest result in the world ; certainly it was of important value, but by no means universally interesting. Klopstock's thoughts about poetry and literature were represented in the form of an old German Druidical republic, and his maxims concerning the genuine and the false were touched upon in laconic pithy sayings, in which much that was instructive was sacrificed to the strange form. For writers and literary men the book was, and is, invaluable, but only in this circle could it be effective and useful. He who had thought for himself followed the thinker ; he who knew how to seek for and prize the genuine, found himself instructed by the profound and honest man ; but the amateur, the general reader, was not illuminated—for him it remained a sealed book ; and yet it had been put in every one's hands ; and when every one was expecting a completely useful work, the majority obtained one for which they had not the slightest taste. The consternation was universal, but the respect for the man was so great that no complaint, hardly a gentle murmur, arose. The young and fair part of the world got over their loss, and laughingly made presents of their dearly bought copies. I myself received several from good lady friends, but of them none is left.

This enterprise, which was successful for the author, but a failure for the public, had the evil consequence that subscriptions and payments beforehand were no longer to be thought of, yet the wish had spread so widely that the attempt could not but be renewed. This the publishing house of Dessau offered to do wholesale. Here both the learned and the publishers in a united association were to enjoy the advantage which was hoped for. The necessity, so long and painfully felt, again aroused great confidence, which could not, however, long maintain itself, and unfortunately the partners separated after a short effort, with mutual loss.

A rapid means of communication had already established itself among the friends of literature. The "Musen-

almanachs"<sup>1</sup> bound together all youthful poets, while the journals united the poets with the other writers. My own pleasure in production was boundless. Towards what I had hitherto produced I was indifferent ; only if I pictured it again to myself and others in a social circle my attachment to it was renewed. Many, too, were gladly interested in my larger and smaller works, because I urgently compelled every one who felt himself in a moderate degree disposed to and capable of production to accomplish something independently in his own manner, and from all in return I was incited to new poetising and writing. This mutual urging and impelling, carried even to extravagance, gave to each according to his nature a joyful influence. Out of this whirling and doing, this living and letting live, this taking and giving, which with free heart were carried on without any theoretic guiding star by so many young men, according to the innate character of each, without special motive, there arose that famous, praised, and cried-down literary epoch.<sup>2</sup>

Here a number of young men of genius broke out in all the grace and all the arrogance which is suited to that time of life ; by the application of their powers they produced much pleasure and much that was good, by the misuse of the same they gave rise to much vexation and much that was evil. And it is just the actions and reactions springing from this source which are the main subject of this volume.

But in what can young people find the highest interest, how can they arouse interest among their equals in age if love does not inspire them, and if affairs of the heart, of whatever kind they may be, are not alive in them ? In silence I had to lament a lost love ; this made me gentle and yielding, and more agreeable to society than in those brilliant times when nothing reminded me of a want or an error, and I rushed forward quite unrestrained.

Frederica's answer to my written farewell rent my heart. It was the same hand, the same thought, the same feeling, which had formed itself for me and by me. I now, for the first time, felt the loss which she suffered, and I saw no possibility of supplying it or alleviating the pain. She was

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<sup>1</sup> Annual publications devoted only to poetry.

<sup>2</sup> Known as the epoch of "Sturm und Drang."

quite present before me. I continually felt that she was wanting to me, and, what was worse, I could not forgive myself my misfortune. Gretchen had been taken away from me; Annette had abandoned me: here, for the first time, I was guilty. I had wounded the most beautiful heart in its depths, and so the period of a gloomy remorse, with the want of an animating love, to which I had grown accustomed, was highly painful, indeed intolerable. But man wishes to live, and so I took a sincere interest in others; I endeavoured to unravel their embarrassments, to unite those who wanted to separate, so that it should not go with them as it had with me. They were accustomed to call me the "Confidant," and also the "Wanderer," on account of my roaming about the neighbourhood. The position of Frankfort was favourable for the quieting of my mind, which I could only acquire under the free sky, in valleys, on hills, in fields and woods, as it lay between Darmstadt and Hamburg, two delightful places, which, through the relationship of both courts, were on good terms. I accustomed myself to live out of doors, and to wander about, like a messenger, between mountain and plain. I often went alone, or in company, through my native city, as if it meant nothing to me; I dined in one of the great hotels in the thoroughfare, and after dinner went on my way farther. More than ever I directed myself to the open world and free Nature. On the way I sang to myself strange hymns and dithyrambics, of which one, with the title "The Wanderer's Storm Song" ("Wanderer's Sturmlied"), still remains. I sang this half-nonsensical piece passionately, when I had to make my way through a terrific storm which met me on the road.

My heart was untouched and unoccupied; I conscientiously avoided all near intimacy with ladies, and so it was concealed from me that a loving genius hovered around without my noticing or knowing of it. A tender and loving woman cherished an affection for me in silence,<sup>1</sup> of which I was unconscious and, therefore, I showed myself more cheerful and agreeable in her kindly society. It was not till many years after, not, in fact, till after her death, that I discovered her secret, heavenly love, and in a way that

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<sup>1</sup> It is not known to whom Goethe here refers.

overwhelmed me, but I was innocent, and could honestly mourn over a pure and innocent creature, and I could do this all the better as the discovery came just in an epoch when I, entirely without passion, had the good fortune to be living for myself and my intellectual inclinations.

But at the time when I was troubled about the pain of Frederica's condition, again, in my old way, I sought for help in poetry. I pursued again the traditional poetic confession, so that by this self-tormenting penance I should become worthy of an inward absolution. The two Marys in "Götz von Berlichingen" and "Clavigo," and the two sorry figures which their lovers<sup>1</sup> cut, may well have been the result of such repentant reflections.

But as injuries and diseases are quickly overcome in youth, because a healthy system of organic life can be a substitute for a sick one, and give it time to recover, so bodily exercises fortunately, on many a favourable occasion, came to my aid, and I was aroused to a fresh manhood and to find joy and pleasure again in life. Riding by degrees took the place of those sauntering, melancholy, wearisome, and aimless wanderings on foot; one then reached one's object more quickly, festively, and comfortably. My youthful companions introduced fencing again; but on the setting in of winter especially, a new world opened up for us. I rapidly decided on skating, which I had never tried, and in a short time, by practice, reflection, and perseverance, I got so far as is necessary to enjoy a gay and lively sheet of ice, without wishing to distinguish myself.

For this new and joyous activity we were also indebted to Klopstock, and to his enthusiasm for this happy kind of movement, which private accounts confirmed, and his odes bear an irrefragable evidence of it. I remember exactly that on a cheerful frosty morning, springing out of bed, I repeated these lines :—

"Already, joyous with the feeling of health,  
Far down along the shore, I have whitened  
The covering crystal.  
How the dawning day of winter illumines  
Softly the lake ! The night has cast  
The glittering frost, like stars, upon it."

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<sup>1</sup> Weislingen and Clavigo.

My hesitating and wavering resolution was determined, and I flew straightway to the place where so old a beginner might make his first trials with some suitability. And, in truth, this expression of strength deserved to be recommended by Klopstock, for it brings us into contact with the freshest childhood, summons the youth to enjoy all his agility, and is disposed to ward off a dried-up old age. We indulged in this pleasure without restraint. We were not content with spending a glorious Sunday on the ice—we continued our exercise till late into the night. For as other exertions exhaust the body, this lends it an ever-fresh power. The full moon rising out of the clouds over the broad meadows at night, frozen into fields of ice, the night wind murmuring about our path, the deep thunder of the ice sinking with the fall of the water, the peculiar echo of our movements, brought perfectly before us the scenes of Ossian. Now this, and now that friend, uttered an ode of Klopstock in declamatory recitative, and if we found ourselves together at twilight there sounded aloud the unfeigned praise of the author of our joys.

“ And shall he not be immortal,<sup>1</sup>  
Who has found for us health and joy  
Such as the horse, strong in the race never gave us,  
Such as the ball is without ? ”

Such thanks the man deserves who knows how to ennoble and worthily extend any earthly activity by means of spiritual impulse.

Just as children of talent—whose intellectual gifts have been cultivated remarkably early, when they have the chance, turn again to the simplest childish plays—we forgot all too easily our call to more serious things ; yet this often solitary exercise, this easy soaring in undetermined space, awoke many of my inward necessities again, which had slumbered for a long time, and to such hours I am indebted for the more rapid completion of earlier undertakings.

The more obscure centuries of German history had always occupied my curiosity and imagination. The idea of dramatising “ Götze von Berlichingen ” in his own period was one which I liked and valued. I read industriously

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<sup>1</sup> From Klopstock's ode, “ Eislauf ” (Skating).

the chief writers of the time ; to the work by Datt, "*De Pace Publica*,"<sup>1</sup> I devoted all my attention. I had with zeal thoroughly studied it, and rendered these strange peculiarities as clear as possible to myself. These labours, directed to moral and poetical ends, I could also make use of in another direction, and as I was now about to visit Wetzlar, I was sufficiently prepared as far as history was concerned ; for the Supreme Court had arisen in consequence of the public tranquillity, and its history could well be an important clue through the confusion of German events. The constitution of the courts of law and of the armies give the most accurate insight into that of any kingdom. Even the finances, the influence of which is held to be so great, are of less importance ; for when there are deficiencies for the whole State, it is only necessary to take from the individual what he has laboriously scraped together and preserved, and then the State is always rich enough.

What I met with in Wetzlar is of no great significance, but it can inspire a higher interest, if the reader will not despise a cursory history of the Supreme Court in order to represent to himself the unfavourable moment in which I arrived there.

The lords of the earth are so, for the most part, by assembling around them those who are most wise and just in peace, as they do those who are bravest and most determined in war. To the capital of a German emperor also there belonged a court like this, which always accompanied him on his journeys through his kingdom. But neither the cares of such a body, nor the Swabian law which obtained in South Germany, or the Saxon law in the North, neither the judges appointed for the maintenance of the laws nor the divisions of the equals of contending parties, nor the arbitration recognised by agreement, nor the friendly settlements brought about by the clergy—nothing could set at rest the inflamed spirit of knightly feuds which among the Germans had been nourished and become a habit by internal strife, foreign wars, but especially by the crusades, and even by judicial usages. These turmoils were vexatious to the emperor as well as to the higher classes. In them, men of small standing were troublesome to each other, and

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<sup>1</sup> Published in 1698.

when they became united, even to the more powerful. Thus all external power was paralysed and internal order was disturbed ; above all this, the *Vehmgericht* was a burden on a great part of the Fatherland, of its horrors one can form some idea by thinking that it had degenerated into a secret police, which finally even came into the hands of private persons.

Much was attempted in vain to prevent these iniquities in some degree, till at length the states urgently proposed a court formed out of their own means. This plan, however well meant, pointed to an extension of the powers of the estates, and a limitation of the imperial sovereignty. Under Frederick III. the matter was delayed ; his son Maximilian yielded from external pressure. He appoints the chief judge, and the estates send the assessors. Of these there were to be twenty-four, but at the beginning they were satisfied with twelve.

A universal fault, of which men are guilty in their undertakings, was also the first and continual fundamental defect of the Supreme Court ; for a great object inadequate means were employed. The number of the assessors was too small. How was this difficult and far-reaching problem to be solved by them ? Who by himself should press for a sufficient establishment ? The emperor could not look with favour on an institution which seemed to work more against him than for him : he had much greater reason to complete his own court—his own council. If, on the other hand, we look at the interest of the estates, all that they wanted was the cessation of bloodshed. Whether the wounds were healed was not of so much consequence to them ; and now here was a new source of expense. It may not have been made quite clear that by this institution every prince would increase his retinue, doubtless for a decided purpose, but who pays money willingly for what is necessary ? Every one would be content if, “for God’s sake,” he could get what was useful.

At first the assessors were to be supported by fees ; afterwards the estates made a moderate grant ; both were wretched. But to help the great and pressing need, willing, excellent, and industrious men were found, and the court was instituted. Whether it was perceived by this that an alleviation and not a cure of the evil could be looked for,

or whether, as is usual in similar cases, they flattered themselves with the hope of doing much with small means, cannot here be decided; enough, the court served as a pretext more for the punishing of disturbers of the peace than for preventing the evil at its source. But it had scarcely come together when its power increased of itself. It feels the height on which it is placed, it recognises its great political importance. Now, by a striking activity, it endeavours to acquire for itself a more decided respect. All that can and must be settled in a short time, that which belongs to the moment, or otherwise can easily be decided, is dispatched at once, and so throughout the whole empire it seems effective and dignified. Affairs of a more serious nature, regular lawsuits, were delayed, but this was no misfortune. The State is only concerned with rendering possession certain and secure, whether it is held rightfully does not trouble it so much. Hence no harm came to the empire from the immense and gradually increasing number of delayed processes. Against people who made use of violence, care had to be taken, and these could be dealt with. Others who went to law about the possession of property, lived, enjoyed, or starved, as they could; they died, were ruined, or settled their difficulties—all that was the profit or loss of individual families, but the empire was gradually tranquillised. For the Supreme Court had given into its hands a legal club-law<sup>1</sup> against the disobedient; had one been able to fulminate excommunication that would have been more effective.

But now, with sometimes increased, sometimes diminished numbers of assistant judges, with the frequent interruptions, with the removal of the court from one place to the other, its records and papers increased to an indefinite number. In the distress of war one carried a part of the archives from Speyer to Aschaffenburg, another part to Worms, the third part fell into the hands of the French, who thought that they had got hold of the archives of the State, and would have been glad to have got rid of this desert of documents if anyone had been willing to furnish carts for the purpose.

At the negotiations for the peace of Westphalia, the

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<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, by virtue of the office a force could be used which was not allowed to private people.



capable men who were assembled saw clearly what a lever was required to move this load of Sisypheus from its place. Fifty assistant judges were to be appointed, but this number was never actually reached. One was satisfied with half, because the expense seemed too great ; but if the parties concerned had seen their interest in the matter, it might have been possible to have afforded the whole. To maintain five and twenty assessors, about a hundred thousand guilders were required ; how easily could Germany have supplied double the amount ! The proposal for endowing the Chamber with the confiscated goods of the Church could not be carried through, for how could the two religious parties agree to this sacrifice. The Catholics were not willing to lose still more, and the Protestants wished to employ what they had gained for private ends.<sup>1</sup> The division of the kingdom into two religious parties had here also, in many respects, the worst influence. Then the interest of the estates on this their own court constantly diminished. The more powerful endeavoured to get free from the confederation ; permits exempting from prosecution before any superior court were eagerly sought for ; the higher ranks kept back their payments, and the lower, who thought they had been prejudiced in the register, delayed as long as they could. It was, therefore, very difficult to raise the necessary daily sum for the salaries. Hence arose a new business, a new pastime for the Chamber ; formerly the so-called annual " visitations " had looked after the matter. Princes in person, or their councillors, betook themselves for weeks or months to the place of the court, investigated the finances, inquired into the balances, and undertook the business of collecting the debts. At the same time when any stoppage in the course of the law and the court, or when any malpractice was likely to creep in, they were authorised to remedy it. Mistakes of the institution they were to discover and remove, but the investigation and punishment of the personal offences of the members did not become a part of their duty till later. But since the parties to lawsuits always desired to put off the last gasp of their hopes for a moment longer, and therefore always

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<sup>1</sup> The Catholics since the Reformation had forfeited a good deal of property, and the Protestants used the income of the same for the support of schools, etc.

sought for and appealed to higher authorities, these visitations became also a court of revision, before which, at first in definite and obvious cases, there might be a new trial, but where at last, in all cases, postponement and prolongation of the dispute was hoped for; to this result the right of appeal to the Imperial Diet, and the struggle of the two religious parties, where they could not outweigh one another, to maintain an equal influence, alike contributed. ,

On reflecting what this court might have been without such hindrances, and without such disturbing and destructive conditions, we cannot imagine how remarkable and important it might have become. Had it been at the beginning possessed of a sufficient number of judges, had they been assured of a sufficient salary, with the capability of Germans, the enormous influence to which this Society could have attained is immeasurable. They would actually have deserved the honorary title of Amphictyons, which was bestowed on them rhetorically, they could indeed have raised themselves to an intermediary power revered alike by the supreme head and members of the State.

But far removed from such great activities the court dragged itself wretchedly along, except for a short time under Charles V., and before the Thirty Years' War. One can hardly understand how men could be found for the miserable and thankless employment. But that which men do every day, if they have skill at it, they take pleasure in, even if they do not see that anything will come of it. The German especially has such disposition for endurance, and so for three hundred years the most esteemed men have busied themselves with these labours and objects. A characteristic gallery of such figures would even now arouse sympathy and inspire courage.

It is just in such anarchical times that the capable man steps forth most firmly, and he who seeks the public good finds himself in his proper place. Thus the Directorship of Fürstenberg is always held in blessed memory, and with the death of this excellent man begins the epoch of many pernicious abuses.

But all these later and earlier evils sprang from the original single source, namely, the small number of persons. It was ordained that the assessors should give their judgments

in a fixed succession, and according to a definite rule. Every one knew when the turn would come to him, and which of the suits he would have to decide ; he could work up to this point ; he could prepare himself. Now, as the unfortunate arrears increased, one was obliged to decide to select the more important legal questions and deal with them out of their order. The decision as to which affair is more weighty in a crowd of important cases is difficult, and the choice gives room for partiality, but now another more doubtful case supervened. The reporter tormented himself and the court with a difficult, complicated matter, and finally there was no one to pay the expense of the verdict. The parties were reconciled, had come to an arrangement, had died, or had changed their minds. It was decided, therefore, to take in hand only those cases of which they were reminded. One had to be persuaded of the continued perseverance of the parties ; hence was given an occasion for the greatest abuses, for he who recommends his own affair must recommend it to some one, and to whom should he recommend it better than to him in whose hands it is already. To keep this secret, according to order, was impossible, for when so many subordinates knew, how could it remain concealed ? If one asked for expedition, one could also ask for favour, for the fact that a man prosecutes his own cause shows that he considers it just. He will not do it directly, but certainly at first by means of underlings. These must be won over, and thus a way is opened to all intrigues and corruptions.

The Emperor Joseph, from his own impulse and from the example of Frederic, first directed his attention to arms and the administration of justice. He fixed his eyes on the Imperial Chambers ; traditional forms of injustice, established abuses, had not remained unknown to him. Here, too, something was to be stirred up, shaken, and accomplished. Without asking whether it would be for the imperial advantage, without foreseeing the possibility of a fortunate result, he proposed the visitation, and hastened its opening.<sup>1</sup> For a hundred and sixty-six years no regular visitation had taken place ; an immense wilderness of documents lay swollen up and increased every year, for the

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<sup>1</sup> Introduced in 1767, and closed in 1776.

seventeen assistant judges were never able to get through the current business. Twenty thousand processes were heaped up, only sixty could be finished off in a year, and double the number was added. For the visitation also, no small number of revisions were waiting ; they were said to amount to fifty thousand. Besides many different kinds of abuses hindered the course of justice, but the most serious of all appeared in the background, namely, the personal offences of some of the assistant judges. When I was about to go to Wetzlar, the visitations had been in progress for some years, the guilty judges were suspended from office, the investigation was far advanced. As now the experts and masters of German national law could not let the opportunity pass of showing their insight and devoting it to the common weal, so many profound, well-intentioned works appeared, from which anyone who had some preliminary knowledge of the subject could acquire complete information. On going back on this occasion to the Constitution of the Empire and the works which treat of it, it was striking how greatly the learned were pleased by the monstrous conditions of this thoroughly diseased body, which was only kept alive by a miracle. For our worthy German industry, which busies itself more with the collection and development of particular facts than with their results, found here an inexhaustible motive for every new occupation. Now the empire was to be opposed to the emperor, the lesser states to the greater, the Catholics to the Protestants, and there were always different opinions to meet these different interests, and always occasions for new strife and controversy. As I had represented to myself as far as possible all these ancient and modern circumstances, I could not promise myself any great pleasure from my residence at Wetzlar. The prospect was by no means attractive of finding in a small and ill-built, though well-situated city, a twofold world : first the domestic, old traditional one, and a foreign new one, authorised to criticise the former severely, a judging and a judged court ; many a citizen in fear and anxiety lest he should be dragged into the impending investigation ; respectable persons, long regarded as worthy, convicted of the most shameful misdeeds and marked out for disgraceful punishment. All this together made the saddest picture ; one could not be attracted to go further

into a business which was complicated in itself, and now seemed so confused through crimes.

I thought that I had foreseen that, apart from German civil and public law, I should meet with nothing of special scientific interest, and be deprived of all poetic companionship, when, after some delay, the desire for changing my condition rather than any thirst for knowledge led me into this region. But how astonished was I, when, instead of a morose society, I was met by a third academic life. At a large table d'hôte I found gay young people together, nearly all subordinates of the commission ; they received me in a friendly way, and it remained no secret to me on the first day that they enlivened their midday meeting by a romantic fiction. Thus they represented with wit and vivacity a table of knights. At the head sat the Grand-master, at his side the Chancellor, then the most important state officials. There followed the knights in order of seniority ; strangers, on the other hand, who visited them, had to be content with the lowest places, and for them the conversation was for the most part unintelligible, because the language in the society had become enriched with many allusions, apart from the expressions of chivalry. To each one a knightly name was allotted with an epithet. Me they called "Götz von Berlichingen the Honest." The former I earned by my attention to our sturdy German forefathers, the latter by my sincere attachment and submission to the excellent men with whom I became acquainted. To the Count von Kielmannsegg I was much indebted throughout my stay. He was the most serious of all, very capable and reliable. Von Goué, a man difficult to understand and describe, a blunt, broad, Hanoverian figure, quiet and reserved, he was not without talents of many kinds. About him there was the suspicion that he was a natural son ; he loved also a certain mysterious kind of behaviour, and concealed his own wishes and plans under manifold eccentricities. He was the very soul of this strange band of knights, without having striven for the place of Grand-master. Thus, just at that time, when this head of the chivalry went away, he let another be chosen, and exercised his influence through him. He knew, too, how to direct trifling incidents so that they appeared important, and could be carried through with formalities drawn from old fables.

In all this one could discover no earnest purpose, he only did it to enliven the tedium which he and his colleagues were obliged to feel in so protracted an affair, and to fill up the vacant space, if it were only with cobwebs. Moreover, this fabulous trifling was carried on with great outward seriousness, without anyone finding it ridiculous when a certain mill was treated as a castle and the miller as its lord, or when the "Four Children of Haimon" was declared a canonical book, and extracts from it read with reverence on occasions of ceremony. The dubbing of knights even was performed with traditional symbols borrowed from several orders of knighthood. One great source of fun was the treating as a secret what everybody knew; our affair was carried on publicly and yet it was not to be spoken of. The list of all the knights was printed with as much formality as a calendar of the Imperial Diet, and if families ventured to scoff at this and to declare the whole affair to be absurd and ridiculous, intrigues were started to punish them until they had stirred some serious husband or near relative to join the society and be dubbed as knight. Then over the vexation of his relations there arose a splendid, malicious delight. To this knighthood there was joined yet another strange order, which was philosophical and mystical, but had no name of its own. The first degree was called the "Transition," the second the "Transition's transition," the third the "Transition of the transition to the transition," and the fourth the "Transition's transition to the Transition's transition." To explain the high sense of these degrees was the duty of the initiated, and this was performed according to the rules of a printed little book, in which those whimsical words were explained in a still more whimsical manner, or rather were amplified. Occupation with these things was the most desirable pastime. The folly of Behrisch and the perversity of Lenz seemed to be united; only I repeat that behind these veils no trace of any purpose was to be found.

I very readily took part in these fooleries, and was also the first to bring into order the selections<sup>1</sup> from the "Four Children of Haimon," and made suggestions how they should be read aloud at feasts and solemnities, and understood

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<sup>1</sup> Portions of the Gospels for Sunday reading.

myself how to deliver them with great emphasis, but I had wearied myself out with such things even before. When, therefore, I felt the want of the Frankfort and Darmstadt society, it was delightful to me to have found Gotter, who attached himself to me with sincere affection, and to whom I showed a hearty good will in return. His mind was delicate, clear, and cheerful ; his talents were practised and well regulated. He devoted himself to French elegance, and was fond of that part of English literature which is occupied with moral and agreeable subjects. We spent many happy hours together, in which we mutually communicated our studies, plans, and inclinations. He stirred me up to many little works, especially, as he was connected with Göttingen, he wanted some of my poems for "Boie's Almanac." By this means I came into some contact with those young and talented men who kept themselves together, and afterwards accomplished so much. The two counts, Stolberg, Bürger, Voss, Hölty, and others, were in faith and intellect gathered around Klopstock, whose influence extended on all sides. In such a circle of German poets, which was ever widening, together with so many poetic merits, there was developed another turn of mind to which I can give no appropriate name. It might be called the need of independence, which always arises in time of peace, and always there where one is not actually independent. In war we endure rude violence as well as we can, we feel that we are injured physically and economically, but not morally ; constraint disgraces no one, and there is nothing shameful in time service ; one is accustomed to suffer from friend and foe ; we have wishes but no opinions. In peace, on the other hand, man's love of freedom stands out more and more, and the freer one is the freer one wants to be. We will submit to nothing ; we will not be confined, nor shall anyone else, and this tender, even morbid feeling appears in noble souls in the form of justice. This spirit and sentiment was at that time universal, and as there were but few who were oppressed, one wanted to free even these from their accidental oppression. And so there arose a kind of moral warfare, a mixture of individuals in the government, which, with praiseworthy beginnings, led to incalculably unfortunate results.

Voltaire, by the protection which he had bestowed on

the Calas family, had excited a great sensation, and gained great respect. In Germany the undertaking of Lavater against the Sheriff of the province (Grebel)<sup>1</sup> had been even more striking and important. The æsthetic disposition, combined with youthful spirit, strove forwards, and as shortly before men had studied in order to obtain offices, they now began to act as supervisors of officials, and the time was near when dramatic and romantic poets liked to find their villains amongst ministers and official characters. Hence arose a half-imaginary, half-real world of action and reaction, in which we later on experienced the most violent back-biting and tale-bearing, which the writers of magazines and journals allowed themselves with a sort of rage under the appearance of justice. And they went to work all the more inscrutably, as they made the public believe that it was the true tribunal, a foolish idea, as no public has an executive power, and in dis-united Germany public opinion neither benefited nor injured anyone.

Among us young people there was nothing to be seen of that kind which was deserving of censure, but a certain similar idea, composed of poetry, morality, and a noble aspiration had taken possession of us, harmless indeed, but yet fruitless.

By "Hermann's-Schlacht,"<sup>2</sup> and the dedication of the same to Joseph II., Klopstock had given rise to a remarkable movement. The Germans who freed themselves from the oppression of the Romans were nobly and powerfully represented, and this picture was well adapted to awaken the self-consciousness of the nation. But while in time of peace patriotism consists only in every one sweeping before his own door, minding his own business, and learning his own lesson, that the house may be in good order, so the patriotic feeling aroused by Klopstock found no object on which it could be practised. Frederic had saved the honour of a part of the Germans against a combined world, and it was permitted to every member of the nation to take a part in the victory of this great prince by applause and

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<sup>1</sup> This man, relying on the influence of his father-in-law, the burgomaster of Zurich, had been guilty of various injustices, for which he was punished in 1763, in consequence of the attacks of Lavater.

<sup>2</sup> The fight of Hermann, the "Arminius" of Tacitus, against the Romans.



reverence ; but what was to come of that excited warlike spirit of defiance ? What direction was it to take, and what effect produce ? At first it was merely a poetic form, and the songs of bards, afterwards so often blamed and even found ridiculous, grew more numerous through this impulse, this incitement. There were no foreign enemies to fight against, so tyrants were imagined, and princes and their servants had to take on this character, at first only in general, but afterwards by degrees in particular, and here poetry united itself with eagerness to that interference with the administration of justice which is censured above, and it is remarkable to see poems of that time which were written altogether in a spirit, by which everything of a higher order, whether monarchical or aristocratic was abolished. As far as I was concerned, I continued to make use of poetry for the expression of my feelings and fancies. Small poems like "The Wanderer" belong to this period ; they were published in the "Göttingen Musenalmanach." But from that mania which had worked into me, I endeavoured shortly afterwards to free myself in "Götz von Berlichingen." I described how in times of disorder the brave and right-thinking man resolves to take the place of the law and exercise its power, but is in despair when his conduct appears equivocal or even rebellious to the superior authority, which he recognises and reveres.

By Klopstock's odes not only had the northern mythology been introduced into German poetry, but much more the nomenclature of its deities, and though I gladly made use of everything else which was offered me, I could not bring myself to employ the same, and for the following reasons, I had long before been acquainted with the fables of the Edda out of the preface to Møller's "Danish History,"<sup>1</sup> and had made myself master of the same. They were among those stories which I most liked to relate, when asked to do so by a society. Herder put "Resenius" into my hands, and made me better acquainted with the heroic *sagas*. But however much I esteemed all these things, I could not bring them into the circle of my own poetic resources ; though they splendidly excited my imagination,

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<sup>1</sup> "Introduction à l'Histoire de Danemark." German translation of this appeared in 1765.

they yet were entirely withdrawn from sensible perception, while the mythology of the Greeks, changed by the greatest artists of the world into visible forms, easily to be imagined, yet existed in a mass before our eyes. In general, I did not let the gods appear much, because they had their dwelling-place outside Nature, which I had learned to copy. What now could have induced me to put Woden in place of Jupiter, Thor in place of Mars, and instead of the exactly described southern figures, to introduce into my poems images of mist, or rather empty echoes. On the one side, they were related to the Ossianic formless heroes, only they were ruder and more gigantic; on the other side, I turned them into bright fairy tales, for the humorous vein which runs through the whole northern myth was to me very pleasing and remarkable. It appeared to me the only one which throughout jests with itself, adventurous giants, magicians, and monsters opposed to a strange dynasty of gods, occupied only in misleading and deriding the highest persons during the time of their power, and threatening them besides with a disgraceful and unavoidable downfall.

A similar if not equal interest was aroused in me by the Indian fables, which I first made acquaintance with in "Dapper's Travels," and also added with great pleasure to my stock of stories. "The Altar of the Ram" was very successful with me as a narrative, though the Ape of Hannemann, in spite of the great variety of persons in this story, remained the favourite of my public. But these unformed and over-formed monsters could not satisfy me exactly in a poetic sense; they lay too remote from that reality towards which my mind continually strove. But against all these spectres, which were hostile to art, my sense of the beautiful was protected by the most glorious power. That is always a fortunate epoch in literature when great works of the past come up again as if thawed, and appear in the order of the day, because they then produce a perfectly fresh effect. Even the Homeric light arose quite new to us, and, indeed, exactly in the spirit of the time, which in the highest degree favoured such an appearance, for the continual reference to Nature at last caused the works of the ancients to be regarded from that side. What many travellers had done for the explanation of the Holy Scriptures, others

did for Homer. By Guys<sup>1</sup> it was introduced ; Wood<sup>2</sup> gave it an impulse. A Göttingen review of the original work, which was at first very rare, made us acquainted with its purpose and taught us how far it had been carried out. We no longer saw in those poems a strained and turgid world of heroes, but the reflected truth of a primeval present, with which we sought as far as possible to make ourselves familiar. At the same time we could not fully entertain the idea, when it was asserted that in order to understand the Homeric poems rightly we must make ourselves acquainted with the savage races and their manners, as they are described by travellers in new worlds ; for it cannot be denied that both Europeans and Asiatics in the Homeric poems are represented as already at a high stage of civilisation, higher perhaps than the period of the Trojan War could have enjoyed. But this maxim agreed with the prevailing confession of Nature and so we allowed it to hold good.

With all these occupations, which related to knowledge of mankind in the higher sense, as well as most nearly and dearly to poetry, I had every day to realise that I was staying in Wetzlar. The conversation with regard to the present conditions of the visitation and its constantly increasing difficulties, the discovery of new offences, we heard hour after hour. Here once more the Holy Roman Empire was assembled, not merely for outward festivities, but for a matter which went right to the bottom of things. But even here must be recalled to my mind that half-empty dining-room on the coronation day, when the invited guests remained outside because they were too grand. Here they had indeed come, but even worse symptoms could be perceived. The lack of coherence in the whole, the opposition of the parts was continually appearing, and it remained no secret that princes had confidentially suggested to each other that they must see whether, on this occasion, something could not be gained from the supreme authority.

Every honest person will feel what a bad impression the petty detail of all the anecdotes of neglects and delays, injustice and corruptions, must have made on a young man who desired what was good and in this view cultivated his

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<sup>1</sup> " *Histoire Littéraire de la Grèce*," 1768.

<sup>2</sup> *Essay on the original genius and writings of Homer*, 1769.

mind. Where, in such circumstances, can arise any reverence for the law or the judge? But if one had placed the greatest confidence in the results of the visitation, and if one could have believed that it would fully accomplish its high destiny, there was still no remedy to be found here for a joyous onwardly striving youth. The formalities of these proceedings all tended towards procrastination. Whoever wanted to do anything, and to be of any importance, must serve the party who was in the wrong, always the side of the accused, and be very skilful in the fencing art of diverting and warding off blows. Since in this distraction I could not succeed in any æsthetic work, I lost myself again and again in æsthetic speculations, as all theorising points to defect or stoppage of the productive power. I had made the attempt earlier with Merck, and now often with Gotter, to discover maxims which should guide me in production. But neither I nor they could succeed. Merck was a sceptic and eclectic; Gotter held fast to those examples which most suited him. Sulzer's theory was published more for the amateur than for the artist. In this sphere moral effects are demanded before all, and hence arises at once a dissension between the producing class and that which makes use of the works produced. For a good work of art can and will have moral results, but to require moral aims of an artist is to destroy his handicraft.

What the ancients had said on these important subjects I had read industriously for some years piecemeal, if not regularly studied. Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, Longinus,<sup>1</sup> not one was overlooked; but that did not help me, for all these men presupposed an experience which I did not possess. They led me into a world infinitely rich in works of art, they developed the merits of excellent poets and orators, of whom, for the most part, only their names remain, and they convinced me very clearly that a great mass of objects must lie around us before we can reflect; that we must first accomplish something, yes, that we must fail, in order to know our own capabilities and those of others. My acquaintance with so much that was excellent in those ancient times was still only the knowledge of schools and books, and in no way

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<sup>1</sup> Longinus' work on "The Sublime" was translated into German by Schlosser in 1781; Goethe was acquainted with it in French translations of the seventeenth century.

living, since especially in the case of the most famous orators it was a striking fact that they had formed themselves altogether in life, and that one cannot speak of their peculiarities as artists without at the same time mentioning their personal characteristics. With poets this seemed to be less the case, but everywhere Nature and Art only came into contact through life ; and so the result of all my thinking and effect was the old purpose of studying both internal and external Nature, and in loving imitation of her everywhere to let her have sway.

With these workings, which rested in me neither day nor night, lay before me two great or rather immense masses of material, whose wealth I had only to prize in some degree in order to produce something significant. This was the more ancient epoch in which falls the life of "Götz von Berlichingen," and the more modern one, whose unhappy bloom is depicted in "Werther."

Of the historical preparation for the first work I have already spoken ; the ethical causes of the second must now be explained. That resolution, to let my inner nature go according to its peculiarities, and to let my outer nature influence me according to its qualities, drove me to that strange condition in which "Werther" was designed and written. I endeavoured to free myself outwardly from all that was foreign to me, to regard lovingly that which was external, and to allow all creatures from man downwards, so far as they could be comprehended, to work upon me each in its own way. Thus arose a wonderful affinity with the individual objects of Nature and an inner accord, a harmony with the whole, so that every change, whether of places and regions, or of days and seasons, or whatever else might happen, affected me most inwardly. The glance of the painter united with that of the poet ; the beautiful rustic landscape, enlivened by the pleasing river, increased my affection for solitude and favoured my silent contemplations, which extended themselves on all sides. But since I had left that family circle at Sesenheim and the society of my friends at Frankfort and Darmstadt, a vacuum remained in my heart which I was not able to fill ; I found myself therefore in a position in which our affections, so long as they appear in some degree disguised, steal in upon us unawares, and render vain all our good intentions.

And now that the author had arrived at this stage of his undertaking, his heart for the first time feels easy in its labour, for from now onwards this book will be what it properly ought to be. It has not been announced as an independent work, much rather is it destined to fill up the gaps of an author's life, to complete many a fragment, and to preserve the memory of lost and forgotten risks. But what is already done ought not and cannot be repeated. In vain would the poet now summon up those darkened powers of the soul, in vain ask of them to represent again those charming relations which had given such lofty beauty to his stay in Lahnthal. Fortunately his good genius had already provided for that, and impelled him while in the vigorous period of youth to hold fast that which had just gone by, to describe it, and boldly enough at a favourable hour to give it to the public. That here the little book "Werther" is meant requires no closer indication. But of the persons therein introduced, as well as of the sentiments there set forth, there will be something to reveal by degrees.

Among the young men who were attached to the Commission, and were preparing themselves for their future career, was one whom we used to call simply the "Bridegroom." He distinguished himself by a calm, equable behaviour, clearness of views, definiteness in speech and action. His cheerful activity, his persevering industry recommended him to his superiors, so that an early appointment was promised him. Hereupon he felt justified in getting engaged to a lady who fully harmonised with his temper of mind and his wishes. After the death of her mother, as head of a numerous family she had showed herself extremely active, and alone had sustained her father in his widowerhood. Her future husband could therefore hope for the same for himself and his posterity, and expect a decided domestic happiness. Every one confessed, without having in view these personal ends, that she was a desirable lady. She was one of those who, if they do not inspire vehement passions, yet are made to excite a universal pleasure. A lightly built, neatly formed figure, a pure healthy nature, and the glad activity of life which thence arises, an unembarrassed management of the necessities of the day, with all this she was endowed. The consideration of such qualities was always agreeable to me, and I gladly

associated myself with those who possessed them ; if I did not always find an opportunity of doing them actual service, I shared with them more readily than with others the pleasure of those innocent joys which youth always finds at hand and can seize upon without great effort and expense. And as it was further settled that women only adorn themselves for each other, and are, when together, unwearied in increasing the methods of adornment, those were my favourites who gave the friend or bridegroom the silent assurance that all was done for him only, and that without much trouble and cost a whole life could thus be carried on. Such persons are not too much occupied with themselves ; they have time to observe the outside world, and sufficient composure to adapt themselves to it and harmonise with it. They become prudent and sensible without exertion, and require for their culture but few books. This was the case with the bride. The bridegroom, with his thoroughly upright and confiding disposition, soon made every one whom he prized acquainted with her, and was pleased, while he zealously gave up the greater part of the day to his business, when his betrothed, after the completion of her domestic labours, amused herself otherwise, and found social pleasure in walks and rural parties with friends of both sexes. Lotte—for so we will call her—was unassuming in a double sense, because in accordance with her nature she was more inclined to a universal kindness than to special attachments ; and since she had destined herself for a man who was worthy of her, and would declare himself ready to unite his fate with hers for life. The most cheerful atmosphere breathed around her. Yes, if it is a pleasing sight to see parents devoting an uninterrupted care to their children, there is still something more beautiful when brothers and sisters do for brothers and sisters the same service. In the former case we seem to see more the impulse of nature and of custom, but in the latter there is more of choice and free exercise of feeling.

The newcomer, completely free from all ties, and without care in the presence of a maiden who, already engaged, could not interpret the most polite attentions as courtship, and therefore could enjoy them all the more, allowed himself to go quietly on, but was soon involved and fascinated, and at the same time treated with such confidence and friend-

ship by the young couple that he no longer knew himself. Indolent and dreamy, because nothing present satisfied him, he found that which he lacked in a fair friend who, while she lived for the whole year, seemed only to live for the moment. She liked to have him as her attendant, and soon he could not do without being near her, for she became for him the medium of the everyday world. Soon they became inseparable companions in an extensive household, in the fields and meadows, in the kitchen—as well as in the flower-garden. If his business allowed it, the bridegroom was with them ; they had all three become accustomed to one another without wishing it, and did not know how it came that they could not do without each other. So they lived through a splendid summer, a genuine German idyll, for which the fruitful land provided the prose, and a pure affection the poetry. Wandering through the ripe corn-fields they were refreshed in dewy mornings ; the song of the lark, the cry of the quail were delicious sounds ; hot hours followed, tremendous storms broke over the country ; they only clung closer to each other, and many a little family vexation was easily extinguished by enduring love. Thus one ordinary day followed another, and all seemed festal days ; the whole calendar should have been printed in red. He will understand me who recollects what is prophesied of the happy unhappy friend of the “New Heloise”<sup>1</sup> : “And sitting at the feet of his beloved he will break hemp, and will wish to break hemp to-day, to-morrow, and next day, yes, for his whole life.”

I can only say little, but perhaps as much as is necessary, of a young man, whose name afterwards was only too often mentioned. This was Jerusalem, the son of the free and finely thinking theologian. He was also attached to an embassy ; his figure was pleasing, of medium height, well built, his face more round than long, his features were soft and calm, with whatever else is suitable to a handsome young man of blond complexion, eyes which were blue and might be called attractive rather than full of meaning. His dress was that introduced in Lower Germany in imitation of the English ; a blue coat, waistcoat and trousers of yellow leather, and boots with brown tops. The author

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<sup>1</sup> Rousseau's novel, Book V., Letter 7.



never visited him, nor was he seen at his residence, but he often met him among friends. The expressions of the young man were restrained but friendly. He took an interest in the most dissimilar productions, but he specially liked those drawings and sketches in which the quiet character of lonely regions had been caught. On such occasions he showed Gesner's etchings, and encouraged amateurs to study them. In all the knighthood business and mummery he took little or no interest, but lived for himself and his own sentiments. A decided passion for the wife of a friend was spoken of, but one never saw them publicly together. In general, one had little to say of him, except that he occupied himself with English literature. As the son of a well-to-do man he did not require to devote himself to his business with anxiety, nor to press for a speedy appointment.

Those etchings of Gesner's increased the pleasure and interest in rustic subjects, and a small poem, which we received with passion in our narrow circle, allowed us henceforward to care for nothing else. "The Deserted Village" of Goldsmith must please every one at that stage of culture and in that circle of ideas. All that which we have loved to see, which has been dear to us, which we have prized and sought for passionately in the present so that we might take a youthful, joyous interest in it, was described not as living or active, but as a past and vanished existence. Festivals and holidays in the country, church consecrations and fairs, the grave assemblage of the elders under the village lime trees, supplanted by the keen delight of youth in dancing, and at the same time the sympathy of the cultivated classes. How fitting did all these pleasures seem, controlled by an excellent country clergyman, who understood how to smooth over and remove all that went too far or could give occasion to quarrels and dissensions. Here we found again our honest Wakefield in his well-known sphere, no longer his very self, but as a shadow evoked by the low, plaintive tones of the elegiac poet. The thought of this representation is one of the most felicitous when once the design is grasped of recalling with pleasing sadness an innocent past. And how successful the Englishman has been in every sense in this agreeable purpose! I shared my enthusiasm with Gotter for this most charming poem, who was more fortunate than I in

the translation which we both undertook. For I had endeavoured much too anxiously to imitate in our language the delicate significance of the original, and thus while it answered well with some passages, it did not do so with the whole.

If, as they say, the highest happiness consists in longing, and true longing can only be directed to the unattainable, everything now combined to make the youth whom we are accompanying in his wanderings the happiest of mortals. An attachment to an engaged bride, the effort to gain and appropriate for our own literature the masterpieces of a foreign one, the endeavour to imitate natural objects, not only with words but with graver and pencil, without actual technique—all this was sufficient to make the heart swell and to oppress the bosom. But that the sweetly suffering youth might be torn from these circumstances and prepared for a new unrest in new conditions, the following events occurred :—

There was living at Giessen, Höpfner,<sup>1</sup> professor of law. He was recognised and highly esteemed by Merck and Schlosser as a capable man in his department, and also a man of mind and honest. I had already for a long time wished for his acquaintance, and now, as these two friends were thinking of paying him a visit in order to talk over some literary subjects, it was agreed that I should take this opportunity of going to Giessen at the same time. But, as usually happens in the wantonness and joyfulness of peaceful times, we could not easily do anything in the obvious way, but, like real children, we tried to get some sort of fun even out of what was necessary, so I was to appear as an unknown person in a strange form, and agree to satisfy my passion for disguise. Accordingly, on a light morning, before sunrise, I started from Wetzlar along the Lahn, up that dear valley. Wandering of this kind constituted my greatest happiness. I invented things, put them together, looked them over, and in the quietude was cheerful and happy with myself. I set to right all that the contradictory world had clumsily and carefully pressed upon me. Arrived at the object of my journey, I sought for Höpfner's house, and knocked at the door of his study. When he had called out

"Come in," I entered modestly before him, as a student who, going home from the universities, wished on the way to make the acquaintance of the most distinguished men. I was prepared for his questions as to what more nearly concerned myself. I related a plausible prosaic tale, with which he seemed satisfied, and as I gave myself out as a lawyer, I did not come off badly, for I knew his merit in this department, and knew that he was just then occupied with natural law. Conversation, however, halted sometimes, and it seemed as though he were looking for an album, or for me to take leave. Yet I managed to delay, as I awaited Schlosser with certainty, of whose punctuality I was well aware. He did actually come, was welcomed by his friend, looked at me sideways, but took little notice of me. But Höpfner drew me into the conversation, and showed himself to be a thoroughly, kindly, humane man. At last I took my leave and hurried to the tavern, where I exchanged some cursory words with Merck, and came to an understanding as to what was to follow.

The two friends had proposed to ask Höpfner to dinner, and at the same time that Christian Heinrich Schmidt, who had played a part, though a very subordinate one, in the German literary world. For him the affair was really designed, and for many of his sins he was to be punished in an amusing manner. When the guests had assembled in the dining-room, I asked, through the waiter, whether the gentlemen would allow me to dine with them. Schlosser, to whose countenance a certain severity was very becoming, opposed it, because they did not wish to have their friendly conversation disturbed by a third party. But, as the waiter urged it, and Höpfner advocated it, who assured them that I was a tolerable fellow, I was admitted, and behaved myself at the beginning of dinner modestly and abashed. Schlosser and Merck were under no constraint, and launched forth over many things as openly as if no stranger had been there. The most important literary matters, as well as the men of highest reputation, came into the conversation. I now showed myself somewhat bolder, and was not embarrassed when Schlosser sometimes threw out to me something in earnest, and Merck something sarcastically. I turned all my arrows upon Schmidt, and hit sharply, and certainly his weak points, which were well known to me.

I had been moderate with my pint of table wine, but the

gentlemen ordered better, and did not fail to give me some. After many events of the day had been gone through, the conversation passed to general subjects, and we discussed the question which will always be repeated as long as there are writers, namely, whether literature is on the ascent or descent, going forwards or backwards. This question, on which especially old and young, those who are coming on the stage, and those who are leaving it, seldom agree, was discussed cheerfully without any special attention of coming to a definite understanding. At last I took up the discourse and said : " Literature, it appears to me, has seasons, which, changing with one another, as in Nature, produce certain phenomena and regularly return. Hence I think that one cannot either praise or blame any epoch of literature altogether ; in particular I do not want to see certain kinds of talent which are called forth by the time so uplifted and highly praised, while, on the other hand, others are censured and depreciated. The throat of the nightingale is excited by the spring, at the same time also that of the cuckoo. The butterflies, which so charm the eye, and the gnats, which annoy us, are alike brought forth by the warmth of the sun. If this were laid to heart we should not hear the same complaints renewed every ten years, and the vain endeavour which is taken to root out this or that thing which displeases us, would not so often be wasted." The company looked at me with astonishment ; whence had such wisdom and tolerance come to me ? But I continued quite composedly to compare literary phenomena with the products of Nature, and, I don't know how, I came upon molluscs, of which I managed to set out all sorts of strange things. " There," said I, " are creatures to which one cannot deny a certain kind of body, but as they have no bones, one cannot make anything of them, and they are nothing better than living slime ; nevertheless the sea must have such habitants." As I was carrying the simile to excess so as to designate Schmidt, who was present, and that class of characterless literary men, so I was made to notice that a simile carried too far at last becomes nothing. " Well, then," I replied, " I will return to the earth, and speak of ivy. As the molluscs have no bones, so this has no trunk, but yet likes to play the chief part wherever it fixes itself. It belongs to old walls, in which there is nothing

more to destroy ; from new buildings it is properly removed ; it sucks up the goodness of the trees, and to me it is most intolerable when it climbs up a post and assures me that here is a living trunk, because it has covered it with leaves."

In spite of the fact that they found fault with the obscurity and inapplicability of my similes, I became ever more and more animated against all parasitic creatures, and so far as my knowledge of natural history then went, I managed the affair rather neatly. At last I sang a *vivat* to all independent men, a *pereat* to all intruders, seized Höpfner's hand after dinner, shook it vigorously, declared he was the best man in the world, and finally embraced him and the others right heartily. My excellent new friend thought that he was really dreaming, till at last Schlosser and Merck solved the riddle. The discovery of the joke diffused a general hilarity, in which Schmidt himself joined, who was again appeased by our acknowledgement of his actual merits and our sympathy with his favourite tastes.

This intellectual introduction could not do otherwise than enliven and promote the literary congress, for which it was particularly intended. Merck, whose activity was now æsthetic, now literary, now commercial, stimulated the sound thinking, learned Schlosser, who had knowledge in so many branches, to edit for this year the *Frankfurter Gelehrten Anzeigen* ("Learned Advertiser"). They had associated with themselves Höpfner and other university men in Giessen, in Darmstadt a school teacher of reputation, the Rector Wenk, and many other excellent men. Each had, in his own department, sufficient historical and theoretical knowledge, and the spirit of the time caused them to work in unanimity. The two first volumes of this journal (for it afterwards fell into other hands) bear a wonderful testimony to the clearness of the insight, the breadth of the view, the honesty of the purpose of the collaborators. That which is human and cosmopolitan is encouraged ; excellent and rightly famous men<sup>1</sup> were protected against all kinds of importunity, their part is taken against enemies, especially against pupils, who misuse what they have been taught to the injury of their teachers. What was almost the most

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<sup>1</sup> In particular Herder and Gellert are meant.

interesting thing were the reviews of other journals, the *Berliner Bibliothek*, the *Deutsche Merkur*,<sup>1</sup> where the versatility in so many branches of knowledge, the penetration, as well as the impartiality, were justly admired.

As regards myself, they saw well enough that I was lacking in everything that belongs to a reviewer properly so called. My historical knowledge was not connected, the history of the world, the sciences of literature had attracted me only by epochs, special subjects themselves I had studied only partially and in masses. The possibility of reviving things for myself, even out of their connection, and of representing them, led me into the condition of being completely at home in a century, in a department of science without having been instructed in what went before and what followed after. Thus a certain theoretico-practical sense arose in me, so that I could give account of things more as they should be than as they were, in an irregular fashion without proper philosophic connection. To this contributed an easy power of comprehension and a friendly reception of the ideas of others, if they did not stand in direct contradiction with my own.

This literary union was further favoured by an animated correspondence, and, in the near neighbourhood of the places, by frequent personal communications; whoever first read a book reviewed it, often one found another reviewer, the matter was talked over, connected with kindred subjects, and if at last a certain result was obtained, some one took over the editorship. Thus, there were many reviews as clever as they were lively, and as agreeable as they were satisfactory. I often had the office of introducer; my friends allowed me also to jest in their articles and also to appear myself in the case of subjects to which I felt myself equal, and which lay specially near my heart. It would be vain for me to undertake to recall either by description or reflection the peculiar tone and character of those days, if the two annuals of the said Journal did not offer me the most decisive documents. Quotation from passages in which I recognise my own hand, may, with similar essays, appear in the future in the proper place.

In so animated an exchange of knowledge, opinions,

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<sup>1</sup> The well-known publication of Wieland.

and convictions, I soon came to know Höpfner intimately, and liked him greatly. As soon as we were alone I spoke to him on the subject of his profession, which was also to be my profession, and found a very naturally coherent explanation and instruction. At that time I was most clearly conscious that I could easily learn something from books and conversation, but not from continuous professional lectures. A book permitted me to linger on a passage, to look backwards, which oral delivery and a teacher could not do. Often at the beginning of the lecture I seized upon a thought to which I clung, but thus lost what followed, and fell completely out of the train of thought. And so it had happened with me in the law lectures, for which reason I could take many an occasion of talking with Höpfner, who readily entered into my doubts and hesitation, also filled up many gaps, so that the wish arose in me to stay with him at Giessen, to get instruction from him, without withdrawing myself too far from my Wetzlar affections. Against this wish of mine my two friends laboured at first without knowing it, then consciously ; for both were hastening, not only to get away from here themselves, but both had an interest also in getting me from that place.

Schlosser disclosed to me that he had come into a relation, at first friendly, then more intimate, with my sister, and that he was looking around for an early appointment so as to unite himself with her. I was somewhat taken aback by this declaration, though I might have discovered it long ago in my sister's letters ; but we easily pass that by which may hurt the good opinion which we entertain of ourselves, and I now first observed that I was actually jealous of my sister, a feeling which I concealed from myself all the less, because since my return from Strasburg our relation had become much more intimate. How much time had we not consumed in communicating to each other our little affairs of the heart, the love and other matters which had occurred in the interval. And had not a new world in the domain of the imagination opened for me into which I must conduct her also ! My own little bungling work and a widely extended world-poetry were gradually to be made known to her. Thus, I made impromptu translations for her of such passages of Homer as she would chiefly take interest in. Clarke's literal trans-

lation<sup>1</sup> I read into German as well as it would go. My delivery usually transformed itself into metrical turns and endings, and the vividness with which I had apprehended the images, the power with which I gave expression to them, removed all the obstacles of a cramped arrangement of the words ; what I uttered with the mind, she followed with the mind. Many hours of the day we entertained ourselves in this way ; on the other hand, when she had company, the "Wolf Fenris" and "Ape Hannemann" were unanimously called for. How often have I been obliged to repeat in full detail the famous history of how Thor and his companions were turned into apes by the giants who were magicians. So pleasant an impression, therefore, has remained for me of all these poems that they still belong to the most valuable things which my imagination can recall. I had also drawn my sister into connection with the Darmstadt people, and even my wanderings and absences served only to bind us more closely together, as I conversed with her by letter with regard to everything that happened to me, communicated to her at once every little poem, if only a note of admiration, and let her see all the letters I received and the answers I made to them. All this lively activity had been checked since my departure from Frankfort, my stay at Wetzlar was not fruitful enough for such a correspondence, and then my attachment to Lotte might have interfered with my attentions to my sister ; enough, she felt herself alone, perhaps neglected, and therefore gave the more readily a hearing to the honest wooing of an honourable man, who, serious and reserved, worthy of confidence and esteem, had passionately bestowed upon her his affection, of which he was otherwise very sparing. I now had to resign myself to it, and grant my friend his good fortune, though I did not cease to say to myself in secret, with self-confidence, that if the brother had not been absent, it could not have gone so well with the friend.

My friend and prospective brother-in-law was now very anxious that I should return home, because by means of me a freer intercourse was possible, of which the feelings of this man, unexpectedly overcome by a tender affection, seemed extremely in need of. Accordingly, when he soon departed,

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel Clarke had translated Homer into Latin.



he received my promise that I would immediately follow him.

I now hoped that Merck, who was unoccupied, would prolong his stay in Giessen, so that I could spend some hours of the day with my good Höpfner, while our friend should spend his time on the *Frankfurter Gelehrten Anzeigen*; but he was not to be moved, and as my brother-in-law was driven away from the university by love, Merck was driven by hate. For as there are innate antipathies, as certain men cannot endure cats, so Merck was a deadly enemy of all students, who at that time, in Giessen, took delight in the greatest rudeness. As far as I was concerned they were all right; I should like to have used them as masks in one of my carnival plays, but he could not endure their sight by day, and their clamour by night destroyed all his good humour. He had passed the best time of his youth in French Switzerland, and after that enjoyed the agreeable intercourse of court people, men of the world, business men, and cultivated literary men; many military persons, in whom had been awakened an aspiration after intellectual culture, sought him out, and thus his life had moved in a highly cultivated circle. That disorder should annoy him was not to be wondered at, but his aversion from the students was really more passionate than was fitting for a man of discretion, though he often made me laugh by his witty descriptions of their monstrous appearance and behaviour. Höpfner's invitations and my entreaties were of no avail; I must as soon as possible trudge back with him to Wetzlar.

I could hardly wait to introduce him to Lotte, but his presence in this circle did not contribute to my advantage, for as Mephistopheles, wherever he goes, hardly ever brings a blessing, so he by his indifference to this beloved person caused me no joy, though he did not make me waver. I might have easily foreseen, if I had recollected that such slender, delicate persons, who spread a lively cheerfulness around them without making further pretensions, would not particularly please him. He at once preferred the Juno-like form of one of her friends, and as he had not time to form a more intimate connection, he scolded me severely because I had not troubled myself about this magnificent figure, more especially as she was free and without any tie. He thought I did not understand my own advantage, and

above all he did not like to see my special fondness for wasting time.

If it is dangerous to make a friend acquainted with the excellencies of one's beloved, because he may also find her charming and desirable, so is the reverse no less dangerous of being led astray by his disuasion. This was not, indeed, the case here, for the image of her lovingness was deeply enough impressed on me, so that it could not have been easily effaced, but his presence and his persuasions hastened my determination to leave the place. He represented to me so attractively a journey on the Rhine, which he was intending to make with his wife and son, and excited in me the desire at last to see with my own eyes those objects which I had often heard spoken of with envy. Now, when he had gone, I separated myself from Charlotte with a purer conscience indeed than from Frederica, but yet not without pain. This relation, too, by habit and indulgence, had become on my side more passionate than was right ; she, on the other hand, and her betrothed kept themselves within bounds in a cheerful manner which could not have been more beautiful and charming, and the sense of security arising from this caused me to forget all danger. Meanwhile, I could not conceal from myself that this adventure was coming to an end, for the young man's union with the lovely girl depended on his promotion, which was shortly expected, and as a man, who is in any degree resolute, makes a virtue of necessity, so I determined to withdraw voluntarily before I was driven away by what was intolerable.

## BOOK XIII

It was agreed with Merck that we should meet in the fine season in Coblenz at the house of Frau von la Roche. I had sent my baggage and whatever I was likely to want on the way down the Lahn by an opportunity which offered, and now I wandered along this beautiful river, so lovely in its meanderings, so varied in its banks, free as to my resolution, but in my feelings oppressed. I was in a condition in which the silent presence of living Nature is so beneficial. My eye, practised in discovering the beauties of the landscape suited to the painter and beyond him, feasted in the contemplation of near and distant objects, the rocks covered with bushes, the sunny tree-tops, moist meadows, enthroned castles, and the blue mountain ranges enticing me from the distance.

I wandered on the right bank of the river, which glided along in the sunshine partly concealed by a luxuriant bush of willows at some distance below me. Then the old desire arose in me again of being able to imitate such objects worthily. By chance I had a handsome pocket-knife in my left hand, and at the moment there came from the depth of my soul an imperative impulse, I was to fling this knife at once into the river. If I saw it fall in, my wish to become an artist would be fulfilled, but if the immersion of the knife in the river should be hidden by the overhanging bush of willows, so should I give up both the desire and the endeavour. No sooner had this fancy arisen in me than it was carried out. For without considering the usefulness of the knife, which combined several instruments in itself, with my left hand, as I held it, I hurled it violently into the river. But here I had to experience the deceptive ambiguity of oracles which was so bitterly complained of in antiquity. The immersion of the knife in the river was hidden from me by the last twigs of the willow, but the water, which rose up from the fall, sprang like a strong fountain upwards, and was fully

visible to me. I did not explain this phenomenon in my favour, and the doubt which it aroused in me was afterwards the cause of my pursuing these exercises more interruptedly and more negligently, and therefore gave occasion for the import of the oracle to be fulfilled. For the moment at least the outer world was spoiled for me. I gave myself up to my imagination and feelings, and gradually left behind me the pleasantly situated castles and neighbourhood of Weilburg, Leimburg, Diez, and Nassau, generally walking alone, only sometimes for a short time joining myself to another traveller.

After such a pleasant journeying for a few days I came to Ems, where I enjoyed the soft bath several times, and then went down the river in a boat. Then the old Rhine revealed himself to me, the beautiful situation of Oberlahnstein delighted me, but above all, splendid and majestic appeared the castle of Ehrenbreitstein, which stood forth fully armed in its power and might. In most lovely contrast lay at its foot the well-built little place called Thal, where I had no difficulty in finding my way to the house of Privy Councillor Laroche. Having been announced by Merck, I was received very kindly by this noble family, and soon looked upon as a member of it. I was united to the mother by my literary and sentimental tendencies, to the father by my cheerful feeling for the world, and to the daughters by my youth.

The house, quite at the end of the valley, lay at a slight elevation above the river, with a free view down the stream. The rooms were lofty and spacious, and the walls, in the fashion of a gallery, were hung with pictures placed close together. Each window, on every side, acted as a frame to a natural picture, which, by the light of a gentle sun, was brought into vivid relief. I thought I had never seen such cheerful mornings and such splendid evenings.

I was not long the only guest in the house. At the congress which was held here, partly for artistic purposes and partly for purposes of friendship, there was also Leuchsenring, who came up from Düsseldorf. This man, with admirable knowledge in modern literature, had on various journeys, but especially during a residence in Switzerland, gained many acquaintances and much favour, as he was agreeable and ingratiating in manner. He carried several little boxes with him, which

contained the confidential correspondence of many of his friends, for there was generally so great openness among men that one could not speak or write to a single person without considering that it was imparted at the same time to a number. People explored their own hearts and those of others ; and with the indifference of governments to such communications, the great rapidity of the Taxisch post, the security of the seal, the reasonableness of the postage, this moral and literary intercourse soon extended itself further.

Such correspondences, especially with persons of importance, were carefully collected, and on occasions of friendly meetings selections were read aloud, and thus, as political discourses had little interest, people became tolerably acquainted with the wide expanse of the moral world.

Leuchsenring's little boxes contained many treasures of this kind. The letters of a certain Julie Bondelli<sup>1</sup> were very highly esteemed ; she was a woman of sense and merit, and famous as a friend of Rousseau. Whoever had stood in any kind of relation with this extraordinary man, and enjoyed a share of the glory which emanated from him, and in his name a silent community had been disseminated far and wide.

I liked to be present at these readings, for by them I was transported into an unknown world, and became acquainted with the real truth of many an event which had recently taken place. To be sure, all of it was not of much weight, and Herr von la Roche, a cheerful man of the world and of business who, though a Catholic, had already in his writings made merry over monks and priests, thought he saw here also a fraternity where many a worthless individual supported himself by connection with men of importance, whereby in the end he gained advantage, but not they. Usually this excellent man withdrew from the company when the little boxes were opened. Even if he listened occasionally to some letters, a waggish remark was to be expected. Among other things, he said once that he was more firmly persuaded by this correspondence of what he had always believed, namely, that women might spare themselves all sealing-wax, as they need only fasten their letters with pins, and could be assured that they would

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<sup>1</sup> 1731-78. One of the most intellectual and cultivated women of the century.

reach their destination unopened. In the same way he was accustomed to jest about everything which lay outside the circle of real life and activity, and in this followed the disposition of his lord and master, the Count Stadion, minister to the Elector of Mainz, who was certainly not fitted to counteract the worldliness and coldness of the boy by reverence for anything mysterious.

An anecdote of the great practical sense of the Count may here find a place. Having taken a liking for the orphaned Laroche and chosen him for a pupil, he required of the boy the services of a secretary. He gave him letters to answer, despatches to prepare, of which he had to make a fair copy and often to write in cipher, to seal, and superscribe. This lasted several years. When the boy had grown to be a young man and really could perform what he imagined he had hitherto been doing, the Count led him to a large writing desk in which all the letters and packets, unbroken, lay preserved as exercises of the earlier time. Another practice which the Count exacted of his pupil will not be so generally approved. Laroche had been obliged to practise imitating most accurately the hand of his lord and master, so as to relieve him of the trouble of writing himself. But this accomplishment was to be employed not only in business, but in love affairs also, the young man was to take the place of his teacher. The Count was passionately attached to a lady of high rank and talents. When he lingered in her society till late at night, the secretary sat meanwhile at home and hammered out the most ardent love letters; the Count chose one of these and sent it that night to his beloved, who was thus necessarily convinced of the imperishable fire of her passionate adorer. Such early experiences did not give the young man the best idea of written communications about love.

An irreconcilable hatred of the priesthood had firmly rooted itself in this man, who had served two spiritual Electors. Probably it arose from the contemplation of the coarse, tasteless, mind-destroying foolery which the monks in Germany were accustomed to practise in many places, and thereby hindered and destroyed every kind of culture. His letters on monasticism made a great sensation; they were received with great applause by all Protestants and by many Catholics.

But if Herr von Laroche was opposed to everything which could be called sentimentality, and even guarded himself decidedly against the appearance of it, he did not conceal a tender fatherly affection for his eldest daughter, who was indeed nothing else but worthy of love : she was rather short than tall, she was slenderly formed ; her figure free and pleasing, the blackest of eyes, and a complexion which could not be conceived as purer or more blooming. She too loved her father, and was inclined to his way of thinking. As an active man of business most of his time was claimed by his professional work, and since the guests who visited the house were attracted by his wife rather than by him, society could give him little pleasure. At meals he was cheerful and entertaining, and at least endeavoured to keep his table free from the spice of sentimentality.

Whoever knows the ideas and modes of thought of Frau von Laroche—and by a long life and numerous writings she is known and esteemed by every German—would perhaps conjecture that a domestic misunderstanding must here have arisen. Nothing of the kind ! She was the most remarkable woman, and I know no other to compare her with. Slender and delicately formed, tall rather than short, she had managed to preserve into advanced years a certain elegance of form as well as of manner, which was a pleasing medium between the demeanour of a lady of noble rank and that of the wife of a worthy citizen. Her dress remained for many years the same. A neat little cap with lappets was very becoming to her small head and delicate face, and her brown or grey costume gave to her presence repose and dignity. She talked well, and always knew how, by an expression of feeling, to give significance to what she said. Her manner was perfectly the same to every one. But with all this the most peculiar part of her has not been described ; it is difficult to designate. She seemed to take part in everything, but at the bottom nothing affected her. She was gentle towards everything, and could bear everything without suffering ; the jests of her husband, the tenderness of her friends, the grace of her children, to all of these she responded in the same way, and so she remained always herself without being affected in the world by good or evil, or in literature by excellence or weakness.

To this disposition she owed her independence up to an

advanced age in many sad, nay, painful events. But not to be unjust, I must mention that her two sons, who at that time were children of dazzling beauty, often drew from her an expression different from that which she daily used.

So I lived in a new wonderfully charming environment for some time, till Merck arrived with his family. Here arose at once new affinities, for while the two ladies drew near to each other, Merck, as a man of the world, with knowledge of business, educated and travelled, had a closer contact with Herr von Laroche. The boy became the companion of the boys, and the daughters, of whom the eldest particularly attracted me, fell to my share. It is a very pleasant sensation when a new passion begins to stir within us, before the old one has quite passed away. Thus at sunset we like to see the moon rising on the opposite side, and one takes delight in the double splendour of the two heavenly luminaries.

There was no lack of rich entertainment both in and out of the house. We wandered through the country, ascended Ehrenbreitstein on this side of the river, and the Carthause on the other. The city, the Moselle Bridge, the ferry which brought us over the Rhine, all afforded a great variety of pleasure. The new castle was not yet built ; we were taken to the place where it was to stand and we were allowed to see the proposed plans.

Nevertheless, amid these cheerful circumstances that element of unsociableness inwardly developed itself, which in cultivated, as in uncultivated society, shows its unpleasing effects. Merck, at the same time cold and restless, had not for long listened to that correspondence before he uttered many waggish remarks about the things which were said, also about the persons and their circumstances, but to me in private he disclosed the strangest things which lay concealed behind them. There was no question of political secrets or of anything else which had a definite connection ; he only drew my attention to men, who without special talents, managed by a certain tact to acquire personal influence, and by acquaintance with many persons endeavoured to make something of themselves ; and from this time onwards I had the opportunity of observing several more of this kind. As such people usually change their place, and, as travellers enter now here, now there, they



have novelty always in their favour, for which they are not to be envied or disturbed, for this is a customary matter, which every traveller has experienced to his advantage and every resident to his detriment. Let that be as it may, it is enough that from that time we cherished a certain restless, indeed envious attention, to those people who for their ~~own~~ purposes went hither and thither, cast anchor in every city, and sought to gain influence in some families at least. I have represented a delicate and tender brother of this guild in Father Brey, another more capable but more blunt in a carnival play, hereafter to be published with the title "Satyrus, or the Deified Wood Devil,"<sup>1</sup> if not with justice, at least with good humour.

Meanwhile, the strange elements of our little society worked tolerably on each other ; we were restrained partly by our own manners and sense of propriety, and softened by the peculiar conduct of our hostess, who, being but lightly affected by what went on around her, always resigned herself to certain ideal notions, and while she understood how to express them in a friendly and benevolent way, managed to tone down everything sharp that might arise in the company, and to smooth out everything that was uneven.

Merck had sounded the retreat just at the right moment, so that the company parted from one another on the best of terms. I went with him and his family in a yacht which was returning up the Rhine to Mainz, and though this vessel went very slowly of itself, we besought the captain not to hurry himself. Thus we enjoyed at leisure the infinitely various objects which, in the most glorious weather, seemed every hour to increase in beauty, and both in grandeur and agreeableness ever to change anew. I only wish while I mention the names of Rheinfels, St Goar, Bacherach, Bingen, Elfeld, and Biberich, that every one of my readers was able to recall these regions to his memory.

We had sketched industriously, and had thereby at least impressed on ourselves more firmly the thousandfold variations of those magnificent banks, but our relationship, too, became more intimate, by being so long together, by con-

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<sup>1</sup> The piece was first published in 1817. In "Satyrus" it is Basedow who is described.

fidential communications about so many things, that Merck acquired a great influence over me, and I became necessary to him, as a good companion, for the happiness of his existence. My eye, sharpened by Nature, turned again to the study of Art, for which the beautiful Frankfort collection of pictures and engravings offered the best opportunity, and I have been much indebted to the kindness of Messrs Ettling and Ehrenreich, but especially to the excellent Nothnagel. To see Nature in Art became with me a passion, which, in its highest moments, could not but appear to others, even to impassioned amateurs, almost like madness, and how could such an inclination be better nourished than in the continual contemplation of the excellent works of the Netherlands? But that I might make myself actively acquainted with these, Nothnagel gave up to me a cabinet, where I found everything necessary for oil painting, and I painted from Nature some simple subjects of still life, one of which a knife-handle of tortoiseshell, inlaid with silver, so astonished my master, who had visited me an hour before, that he declared one of his subordinate artists must have been with me during the time.

Had I continued patiently to practise on such subjects, catching their light and shade and the peculiarities of their surface, I should have formed a sort of practical skill and opened a way for myself to something higher, but the fault of all dilettantes pursued me, namely, that of beginning with the most difficult, even wishing to attempt the impossible; and I soon involved myself in greater undertakings, in which I stuck fast, because they lay far beyond my technical capacities, and because I could not always maintain pure and active the loving attention and calm industry by which even the beginner can accomplish something.

I was also at the same time transported into a higher sphere, as I found opportunity of acquiring some fine plaster casts of antique heads. The Italians, who frequent fairs, often bought good specimens of those things, and sold them reasonably after they had taken moulds of them. In this way I started for myself a little museum; by degrees I got together the heads of the Laocoön, of his sons, the daughters of Niobe; none the less I bought copies of the most important works of antiquity in miniature out of the estate of a deceased friend of Art, and endeavoured to

revive in myself, as much as possible, that great impression which I had gained in Mannheim.

While I was now trying to cultivate, foster, and maintain everything in the way of talent, taste, or any other inclination that might be alive in me, I applied a good part of the day, according to the wish of my father, to the duties of an advocate, for the practice of which I had by chance the best opportunity. After the death of my grandfather, my Uncle Textor had entered the Council, and he handed over to me those lesser affairs to which I was equal ; and the brothers Schlosser did the same. I made myself familiar with the cases ; my father also read them with much pleasure, as he saw himself, by means of his son, again brought into an activity of which he had long been deprived. We discussed the matter, and then with great facility I made the necessary arguments. We had at hand an excellent copyist, on whom we could rely for everything to do with chancery formalities. And this business became for me a more agreeable occupation, as it brought me nearer to my father, who was fully content with my behaviour in this respect, and willingly permitted everything else that I was carrying on, in the ardent expectation that I should soon reap a harvest of fame as an author.

Now, as in every epoch all things are connected together, according to the manifold ramifications of the prevailing opinions and sentiments, so by degrees all those maxims came to be followed in the science of law, according to which religion and morals were treated. Among lawyers, both young and old, as well as among judges, a humane feeling became prevalent, and all vied with each other in being as humane as possible, even in legal affairs.

Prisons were improved, crimes excused, punishments made milder, the legitimization of children was made easier, divorces and *mésalliances* were encouraged, and one of our best lawyers gained the highest fame when he contrived to procure for the son of an executioner an entrance into the college of surgeons. It was in vain that guilds and corporations opposed ; one barrier after another was broken through. Tolerance of religious parties to one another was not only preached, but practised ; and the civil constitution was threatened with a still greater inroad, when an effort was made with understanding, acumen, and power to

recommend to that good-humoured age toleration towards the Jews.<sup>1</sup> These new subjects of legal treatment, which lay outside the law and the tradition, and only claimed a fair examination and friendly sympathy, demanded at the same time a more natural and more vivid style. Here was a cheerful field opened to us young men, in which we bustled about with pleasure, and I still remember very well that an Imperial Councillor's agent, in such a case, sent me a very polite letter of commendation. The French *plaidoyés* served us as models and stimulated us.

And so we were on the way to become better orators than jurists, for which the serious George Schlosser blamed me on calling my attention to it. I had told him that I read to my clients a controversial paper written with much energy in their interest, on which they displayed great satisfaction. Hereupon he replied: "You have in this shown yourself more a writer than an advocate. One should never ask how such a writing may please the client, but how it may please the judge."

But as it happens no one can have such serious and pressing business to which he devotes his day but that in the evening he can find time enough to visit the play, so it happened to me that in want of a really good stage, I did not cease thinking of the German theatre in order to discover how one might take part in it with any kind of activity. The condition of the same in the second half of the last century is well enough known, and every one who wishes to be informed about it can find assistance everywhere. For that reason I shall now insert only a few general remarks.

The success of the stage rested more on the personality of the actors than upon the worth of the pieces. This was especially the case with those half or wholly extemporised plays, where everything depended on the humour and the talent of the comic actors. The materials for such plays must be taken from the commonest life, in conformity with the manners of the people before whom they are acted. From this immediate adaptation arises the great applause which these players have always enjoyed. These were always at home in South Germany, where they are still preserved

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<sup>1</sup> Articles in favour of the emancipation of the Jews belong to a later period, 1781.

to the present day, and only from time to time is it necessary to give some alteration to the comic masks by a change of personnel. Yet the German theatre, in accordance with the serious character of the nation, soon took a tendency to moral subjects, which was still more accelerated by an external cause. Among strict Christians the question arose, whether the theatre belonged to those sinful things which were to be avoided at all costs, or was one of those indifferent things, which can be good for the good and evil only for the evil. Severe zealots denied the latter, and held firmly the view that no clergyman should ever enter the theatre. The opposite opinion could not be maintained with rigour unless one declared that the theatre was not only harmless, but even useful. In order to be useful it must be moral; and in this direction it formed itself in North Germany the more readily as by a kind of half-taste, the comic character was banished, and although intelligent minds<sup>1</sup> defended it, they had to give way, because one had turned from the coarseness of the German merry-andrews to the neatness and delicacy of the Italian and French harlequins. Even Scapin and Crispin vanished by degrees, the latter I saw played by Koch for the last time in his old age.

The novels of Richardson had already made the world at large attentive to more refined morality. The strict and inevitable consequences of a feminine *faux pas* were analysed in "Clarissa" in a cruel manner. Lessing's "Miss Sarah Sampson" treated of the same subject; the "Merchant of London" exhibited a misled young man in the most frightful situation. The French dramas had the same object, but proceeded with greater moderation, and knew how to please at the end by some compromise. Diderot's "Père de Famille," the "Honourable Criminal," the "Vinegar Dealer," the "Philosopher Without Knowing It, Eugenie,"<sup>2</sup> and many others of the same kind, were adapted to the honest spirit of citizenship and family, which began to prevail more and more. Among us, the "Thankful Son," the "Deserter from Love of His Children," and that whole class went the same way. The "Minister," "Clementine," and the other pieces of Gehler, the "German Father," by

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<sup>1</sup> Lessing and Möser.

<sup>2</sup> By Beaumarchais.

Gemmingen, all these brought the worth of the middle, even of the lower class agreeably to view, and delighted the great public. Eckhof, by means of his noble personality, which imparted to the position of the actor a certain dignity, which it had not had before, elevated to an uncommon degree the leading characters of such pieces, while the expression of honesty succeeded with him completely, as being an honest man.

While now the German theatre was inclining to complete effeminacy, Schröder<sup>1</sup> arose as an actor and writer, and adapted some English comedies, owing to the connection between Hamburg and England. He could only use the materials of the same in a most general way, for the original plays are for the most part without form, and even if they begin well and with a plan, they lose themselves at last in vagueness. It seems as though all the author had to do was to bring forward the most strange scenes, but whoever is accustomed to a restrained work of art does not willingly see himself driven into boundless chaos. Besides, they are pervaded by a tone so wild, immoral, dissolute to an intolerable degree, that it is difficult to remove from the plot and the characters all their ill-breeding. They are a tough and dangerous kind of food, which can be digested and enjoyed only by a great and half-corrupted populace at a certain period of time. Schröder has done more for these things than is generally known; he changed them thoroughly, assimilated them to the German taste, and softened them as much as possible. Still there remains in them always a bitter kernel, because the joke turns upon the abuse of persons whether they deserve it or not. In these performances, which were also widely spread upon the stage, there lay a hidden counterpoise to that too sensitive morality, and the effect of these kinds of drama against one another fortunately prevented a monotony into which we should otherwise have fallen.

The German, who is kindly and magnanimous by nature, likes to see no one ill-treated. But as no man, however well he thinks, is secure that something contrary to his inclinations will not be insinuated into his mind, and as comedy

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<sup>1</sup> 1744-1816. An actor from childhood. Goethe became personally acquainted with him.

always presupposes or awakens in the spectator a kind of malicious delight, if it is to amuse him, so a natural way was found to a conduct which had hitherto been regarded as unnatural. This was to lower the higher classes, and more or less to attack them. Satire, whether in prose or verse, had hitherto always avoided attacking the court and nobility. Rabener restrained himself from all jokes in that direction, and remained in a lower circle. Zachariä occupies himself much with country noblemen, depicts comically their tastes and peculiarities, but this is done without undervaluing them. Thümmel's<sup>1</sup> "Wilhelmina," a witty little composition, as pleasing as it was bold, won great applause, perhaps because the author, a nobleman and courtier, treated his own class unsparingly. Lessing, however, took the most decided step in "Emilia Galotti," in which the passions and intriguing relations of the higher classes are described in a bitter and cutting manner. All these things perfectly suited the excited spirit of the time, and men of less wit and talent thought they could do the same, or even more; like Grossmann,<sup>2</sup> who, in six repulsive dishes, served up to the malicious public all the dainties of his vulgar kitchen. An honest man, Hofrath Reinhard, played the major-domo at this unpleasant board, to the comfort and edification of all the guests. From this time forwards theatrical villains were always chosen from the higher ranks, and a person must, however, be a gentleman of the bedchamber, or at least a private secretary, to make himself worthy of such a distinction. But for the most godless examples one selected the highest offices and places in the court and civil list, in which high society, even justiciaries, found their place as villains of the first order.

Though I am afraid that I have been carried beyond the time, which is now the subject in hand, I will return to myself, in order to mention the impulse which I felt to occupy my leisure hours with the theatrical plans which I had already formed.

By my continued interest in Shakespeare's works I had so broadened my mind that the narrow space of the stage

<sup>1</sup> 1738-1817. Lived at the court of Coburg as Privy Councillor Minister.

<sup>2</sup> 1746-96. An actor and poet. Much praised by his contemporaries and Schiller. His play, "Not More Than Six Dishes," appeared in 1780.

and the short time allotted to one play did not seem sufficient for the presentation of an important subject. The life of the sturdy Götz von Berlichingen, written by himself, impelled me to the historical mode of treatment, and my imagination so much extended itself that my dramatic form also exceeded all theatrical limits, and endeavoured more and more to approach the living events. As I went on, I had spoken in detail about it with my sister, who entered into such things with heart and soul, and I renewed this conversation so often, without getting to any work, that she, at last impatiently but kindly urged me not always to be sending words into the air, but at last to set down firmly on paper that which was so present to my mind. Decided by her instigation, I began to write one morning without having made any previous sketch or plan. I wrote the first scenes, and in the evening they were read aloud to Cornelia. She bestowed much applause on them, but only conditionally, as she doubted whether I should continue in the same way, and even expressed a decided disbelief in my perseverance. This stimulated me the more; I continued the next day, and the third. Hope increased with the daily communication, and for myself at every step everything gained more life, as the material of the piece became thoroughly my own. And so I kept myself to the work uninterruptedly, and pursued it straight on without looking backwards or to the right or left, and in about six weeks had the pleasure of seeing the manuscript stitched together. I communicated it to Merck, who spoke about it intelligently and kindly; I sent it to Herder, who, on the contrary, expressed himself severely and unkindly, and did not fail on that account to mention me, with satirical nicknames in some lampoons written for the occasion. I did not let myself be led astray, but looked sharply at my subject; the die was now cast, and the only question was how to make the game advantageous. I clearly saw that here no one could advise me, and when, after some time, I could look at my work as if it had been a stranger's, I recognised that in the attempt to give up the unity of time and place I had impinged upon the higher unity, which is thus the more required. As I had resigned myself, without any sketch or plan, simply to my imagination and an inward impulse, I had at the beginning kept close to



the subject, and the first acts could suitably pass for what they were intended to be. In what followed, however, and especially towards the end, a strange passion carried me unconsciously away. While attempting to describe Adelheid as lovable, I had fallen in love with her myself ; involuntarily my pen was devoted only to her ; my interest in her fate took the upper hand, and as towards the end Götz is withdrawn from action and then only returns to an unfortunate participation in the Peasants' War, nothing was more natural than that a charming woman should thrust him out of the mind of the author, who had shaken off the chain of art, and was trying himself in a new field. I soon recognised this deficiency, or rather this culpable superfluity, since the nature of my poetic faculty always impelled me to unity. I now kept my own work in mind and, instead of the biography of Götz and the German antiquities, tried to give it more historical and national content, and to remove from it what was fabulous or what merely proceeded from passion : by this I certainly sacrificed much, but the inclination of the man had to give way to the conviction of the artist. Thus, for example, I had done exactly what I wanted when I let Adelheid enter upon a horrible nocturnal gipsy scene and work wonders by her beautiful presence. A closer examination banished her, so in the fourth and fifth acts love passages between Franz and his noble lady, which were minutely set forth, were condensed, and only allowed to appear in their main points. Thus, without altering anything in the first manuscript, which I still possess in its original form, I determined to rewrite the whole, and this I did with such industry that in a few weeks an entirely fresh piece lay before me. I went to work with it all the more rapidly, the less I had the intention of ever having this second copy printed, but regarded it only as a preparation, which in the future I should again lay at the foundation of a new treatment to be accomplished with more industry and deliberation.

When I began to set before Merck the numerous designs which I thought of beginning, he laughed at me, and asked what was the use of this everlasting writing and rewriting ? The thing only becomes different by this means and seldom better ; one must see what effect one thing produces and then undertake something new. "Make hay while the

sun shines,"<sup>1</sup> cried he, in the words of the proverb, "delaying and loitering only makes uncertain men." On the other hand, I replied to him, that I should not like to offer a work on which I had bestowed so much affection to a bookseller, and perhaps receive a quite negative answer; for how could they judge a young, nameless, and also audacious writer? Already, as my fear of the Press gradually vanished, I had wished to see printed my "*Die Mitschuldigen*" ("The Accomplices"), but I found no publisher inclined to do it. Here the technical, mercantile taste of my friend was at once aroused. By means of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* he had already relations with scholars and publishers. We ought, therefore, he thought, to publish this strange and certainly striking work at our own expense, and we should draw a good advantage from it. He then, like many others, was in the habit of reckoning up the profit of booksellers which, indeed, on many works was great, especially if we leave out of account the large amount lost by other writings and business affairs. Enough, it was settled that I should procure the paper, and he was to look after the printing; and so we went briskly to work, and I was not at all displeased to see my wild dramatic sketches by degrees transformed into clean proof sheets; they were really neater than I had myself expected. We finished the work, and it was sent out in many packages. It was not long before a great commotion arose everywhere; the sensation which it made was universal. But because, with our limited connections, we could not distribute copies fast enough to all places, there suddenly appeared a pirated edition; besides this, for the copies sent out there could be no immediate return, at least in ready money; so I was, as a young man in a family whose treasury could not be in an abundant condition, at a time when on all sides I was receiving great attention and even applause, in the greatest embarrassment as to how I was to pay for the paper on which I had made the world acquainted with my talents. Merck, who understood better than I how to help himself, cherished the best hopes that all would come right again, but I never perceived that it was so.

Already in little pamphlets, which I had published

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<sup>1</sup> Literally, "Be in time at the hedge if you would dry your linen."

anonymously, I had made acquaintance with the public and the reviewers at my own expense, and I was tolerably prepared for praise and blame, especially as for many years I had observed how those writers were treated to whom I had devoted a particular attention.

In these cases, in my uncertainty, I could clearly perceive how much was said recklessly that was baseless, one-sided, and arbitrary. I now met with the same, and if I had not had some basis of my own, how must I have been led astray by the contradictions of cultivated men? There appeared, for example, in the *German Mercury* a diffuse, well-meaning review, composed by some one of limited intelligence.<sup>1</sup> Where he found fault, I could not agree with him, still less when he declared how the subject could have been dealt with otherwise. I was therefore very much pleased when I found immediately after it a cheerful declaration from Wieland, who in general opposed the reviewer, and took my part against him. However, that review was also printed, and I saw an example of the stupid way of thinking of educated and cultivated men. How, then, would it be with the general public? The pleasure I had in talking over such things with Merck, and gaining a clearer view of them, was of short duration, for the keen-sighted Landgravine of Hesse Darmstadt took him in her suite on her journey to St Petersburg. The copious letters which he wrote to me gave me a wider view of the world, which I could the more easily make my own, as the descriptions were drawn by a well-known and friendly hand. But, nevertheless, I remained for a long time very lonely; and just at this important epoch I was deprived of his enlightened sympathy, of which I then stood greatly in need.

As one forms the resolution to be a soldier, to go to the war, and courageously resolves to endure danger and difficulties, to suffer wounds, pains, and even death, but never represents to oneself the particular cases in which these generally expected evils may unpleasantly surprise one, so is it with every one who ventures into the world, and especially the author; and so it was with me. As the greatest part of the public is more stirred by the subject-matter than by the treatment of it, the sympathy which

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<sup>1</sup> The above-mentioned Schmidt, of Giessen.

young men had for my pieces was mostly related to their subjects. They thought they saw in them a banner, under the guidance of which all that is wild and undisciplined in youth could find vent for itself; and it was just the best brains, which before were haunted by something similar, that were carried away. I still possess a letter written—I don't know to whom—from Bürger, an excellent man, and in many respects unique, which may serve as an important voucher of the effect and excitement produced by the appearance of my play. On the other side, serious men blamed me for having described the law of might in too favourable colours; yes, they attributed to me the intention of thinking to bring back again those anarchical times. Others took me for a man of profound learning, and besought me to publish the original narrative of the good Götz with notes, for which I felt myself by no means qualified, though I allowed my name to be put on the title of the new edition. Because I had understood how to gather the flowers of a great existence, I was taken for a careful florist. However, this learning and profound knowledge of mine was called in question by others. A business man of reputation unexpectedly pays me a visit. I find myself highly honoured, all the more as he begins his conversation with the praise of my "Götz von Berlichingen," and my excellent insight into German history. But I am, nevertheless, astounded when I find that he has really only come to inform me that Götz von Berlichingen had not been the brother-in-law of Franz von Sickingen, and that by this poetic marriage bond I had gone altogether against history. I endeavoured to excuse myself by saying that Götz himself called him so, but to me the reply was that this was a form of speech which only expressed a near, friendly relationship, just as in more modern times we called postillions<sup>1</sup> brothers-in-law, without a family tie uniting them to us. I thanked him, as well as I could, for this information, only regretted that the mistake could no more be remedied. This was also regretted on his side, and he exhorted me, in the most friendly manner, to further study of German history, for which he offered me his library, and I afterwards made good use of it.

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<sup>1</sup> The Germans apply the word Schwager (brother-in-law) to a postillion.

The most amusing thing of this sort which happened to me was the visit of a bookseller, who, with good-natured frankness, applied for a dozen of such pieces, and promised to pay well for them. That we had great fun over this may readily be imagined, and yet at the bottom he was not so far wrong, for I was already quietly occupied in moving backwards and forwards from this turning-point of German history and working up the chief events in a similar spirit. This was a laudable design, which, like so much else, was frustrated by the rushing flight of time.

That play, however, had not solely occupied the author, but while it was conceived, written, rewritten, printed, and circulated, many other images and plans were stirring in his mind. Those which were to be treated dramatically received the preference of being more often thought over and brought towards execution; but at the same time there was developed a transition to another form of writing, which is not usually reckoned dramatic, and yet has a close relationship with it. This transition took place chiefly through a peculiar habit of the author of changing soliloquy into dialogue.

Accustomed to spend his time most happily in society, he transformed solitary thinking into social entertainment, and this in the following way: He was in the habit, when he was alone, of calling some person or other of his acquaintance in spirit to himself. He invited him to sit down, walked forwards and backwards past him, stood still before him, and discussed with him the subject which was in his mind. To this the person answered as the occasion required, or gave to be understood, by the ordinary mimicry his assent or dissent, as every man has something peculiar to himself. Then the speaker continued to carry out further what seemed to please his guest, or to limit and define more closely what he disapproved of, and at last politely gave up his idea. The strangest thing in this was that he never chose persons of his intimate acquaintance, but such as he seldom saw, indeed, who lived far removed from him, and with whom he had only a transient acquaintance. They were mostly persons of a receptive, rather than a communicative nature, who are ready with a clear perception to take a quiet interest in things which lay within their horizon, though he often summoned to these dialectical

exercises contradictory spirits. To this purpose persons of both sexes, of every age and rank, adapted themselves, and showed themselves to be pleasing and agreeable, as one only conversed about subjects which were clear to them and which they liked. To many, however, it would have seemed extremely strange if they had been able to know how often they were called to this ideal conversation, when it would have been difficult for them to attend a real one.

How closely such a mental conversation is related to correspondence by letter is clear enough, only in the latter one sees an established confidence responded to ; in the former one creates for oneself a confidence, which is new, ever-changing, and unresponded to. But as that weariness was to be described which men feel for life, without being driven to it by necessity, the author had to hit upon the plan of exhibiting his sentiments in letters ; for all depression is the offspring and nursling of solitude, whoever resigns himself to it flees from all opposition, and what is more opposed to this depression than cheerful society. The enjoyment which others find in life is to him a painful reproach, and so by that which should draw him out of himself he is forced back into his inmost being. If, by chance, he wishes to express himself about it, it will be in letters, for a written effusion, whether joyful or gloomy, does not oppose anyone directly ; while an answer composed with contrary views gives the solitary spirit opportunity for confirming himself in his own fancies, an occasion for growing still more obdurate. These letters of Werther, which are written in this spirit, have therefore so varied a charm, because their different contents were first uttered in such ideal dialogues with several persons, but afterwards in the composition they appeared to be directed only to one sympathising friend. To say more about the treatment of this little work, of which so much has been said, would not be desirable, but with regard to the contents something may yet be added.

That loathing of life has its physical and moral causes ; the former we hand over to the physician, the latter to the moralist for investigation. In a matter which has been so often treated, we will only consider the chief point, where that phenomenon expresses itself most clearly. All satisfaction in life is based on the regular return of outward things. The alternation of day and night, of the seasons, of flowers

and fruits, and whatever else meets us from epoch to epoch, that we can and should enjoy ; these are the proper impelling forces of earthly life. The more open we are to these pleasures, the happier do we feel ourselves ; but if the variety of these things pass up and down before us without our participating in them, if we are unreceptive to such genial offers, then there comes the greatest evil, the heaviest disease, we regard life as a loathsome burden. It is related of an Englishman that he hanged himself so as not to have to dress and undress himself every day. I knew a worthy gardener, the overseer in the laying-out of a large park, who once exclaimed with vexation : " Must I always see these rain clouds moving from west to east ? " It is told of one of our most admirable men that he saw with annoyance the returning green of spring, and wished for a change that it might for once appear red. These are properly the symptoms of that weariness of life which not infrequently ends in suicide, and which, with thinking men absorbed in themselves, was more common than can be believed. Nothing gives rise to this weariness more than the return of love. The first love, it is justly said, is the only one ; for in the second, and through the second, the highest character of love is lost. The conception of the Eternal and Infinite, which elevates and supports it, is destroyed ; it appears perishable, like all else that recurs. The separation of the sensual from the moral, which in the complicated, cultivated world severs the feelings of love and desire, gives rise here to an exaggeration which cannot produce what is good.

Besides, a young man soon becomes aware from others, if not from himself, that moral epochs change just as much as the seasons of the year. The kindness of the great, the favour of the powerful, the demand of the active, the attachment of the multitude, and the love of individuals, all go up and down without our being able to hold them fast any more than the sun, moon, and stars ; and yet these things are not mere natural events ; they escape us through our own fault or that of others ; but by chance or fate they do change, and we can never be sure of them.

But that which gives most pain to the sensitive youth is the ceaseless return of our faults ; for how late is it that we come to see that while we are cultivating our virtues, we are at the same time building up our faults. The former rest

on the latter as their root, and these latter send forth branches in secret with as much strength and variety as the former send forth in open light. As now we practise our virtues for the most part with will and consciousness, but are surprised by our faults unawares ; the former seldom give us any pleasure, while our faults, on the other hand, constantly cause us trouble and pain. Herein lies the most difficult part of self-knowledge, which makes it almost impossible. Let us now conceive, in addition, a boiling, youthful blood, an imagination easily paralysed by individual objects, and, further, the uncertain movements of the day, and one will not find it unnatural that there should be an impatient striving to free oneself from such distress.

Such gloomy reflections, however, which lead him who gives himself over to them into the infinite, could not have been so decidedly developed in the minds of the youth of Germany, had they not been stirred up and incited to this sad business by an external cause. This was afforded by the English literature, especially the poetic, whose great beauties are accompanied by an earnest melancholy, which it communicates to every one who occupies himself with it. The intellectual Briton sees himself from youth onwards surrounded by a world full of meaning, which stimulates all his powers ; sooner or later he perceives that he must gather together his whole understanding in order to come to terms with it. How many of their poets have not in their youth led a dissolute and riotous life, and have found themselves early justified in complaining of the vanity of earthly things ? How many of them have tried their fortune in worldly affairs, in parliament, at court, in the ministry, in embassies, and have played partly the higher and partly the lower parts, have participated in civil tumults and revolutions of state and government, and have had mournful, more frequently than joyous experiences, if not in themselves, in their friends and patrons ? How many have been banished, outlawed, kept in prison, and damaged with regard to their possessions ?

But even to be the spectator of events so great, summons man to be serious, and whither can seriousness further lead but to the contemplation of the transient character and worthlessness of all earthly things. The German also is serious, and so the English poetry was in the highest degree



suited to him, and imposing, because it arose from a higher state of things. There is to be found in it everywhere a great, capable understanding, trained in the practice of the world, a deep tenderness of feeling, an excellent will, an impassioned activity, the most splendid qualities, for which an intellectual, cultivated man can be praised ; but all these taken together do not make a poet. True poetry proclaims itself thus, that, like a gospel of this world, it understands how to free us from the earthly burdens which oppress us by means of inward serenity and outward enjoyment. Like an air-balloon, it raises us with the ballast, which clings to us into higher regions, and lets the confused labyrinths of the earth lie unravelled before us as in a bird's-eye view. The gayest and the most serious works have the same end, namely, to moderate both joy and pain by a felicitous intellectual representation. If in this light we look at the majority of the English, mostly moral didactic, poems, they will, on the average, only show us a gloomy dissatisfaction with life. Not only Young's "Night Thoughts," where this theme is pre-eminently worked out, but also the other meditative poems wander, before one is aware of it, into this mournful region, where a task is presented to the understanding, which it is insufficient to solve, since even religion, which a man can always construct for himself, here leaves him in the lurch. Whole volumes might be compiled which could serve as a commentary to this frightful text :—

" Then Old Age and Experience, hand in hand,  
 Lead him to death, and make him understand,  
 After a search so painful and so long,  
 That all his life he has been in the wrong." <sup>1</sup>

What besides makes the English poets complete misanthropes, and diffuses over their writings the unpleasant feeling of aversion from everything, is the fact that, on account of the various divisions of their commonwealth, they must devote, if not their whole life, yet the best part of it, to one party or another. Now, as a writer of this kind cannot praise and extol those of his own party to which he belongs, nor the cause to which he adheres, because

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<sup>1</sup> "A Satire Against Mankind," by the Earl of Rochester, famous as the wittiest reprobate at the court of Charles II.

otherwise he would only arouse envy and ill will, so he practises his talent in speaking as badly as possible of those on the opposite side, and in sharpening, nay poisoning, the satirical weapons as much as he can. When this is done by both parties, the world which lies between is destroyed and completely broken up, so that in a great community of sensibly active people one can discover, to use the mildest terms, nothing but folly and madness. Even their tender poems are occupied with melancholy subjects. Here an abandoned girl is dying, there a faithful lover is drowned or is devoured by a shark before he can reach his beloved by hurriedly swimming; and if a poet like Gray lies down in a village churchyard and begins to sing again those well-known melodies, he, too, may be assured of gathering round him a number of friends of melancholy. Milton's "Allegro" must first scare away gloom in vehement verses before he can attain to a very moderate pleasure, and even the cheerful Goldsmith loses himself in elegiac feelings when he exhibits to us as charmingly as sadly his "Deserted Village" as a lost Paradise, which his "Traveller" seeks over the whole earth.

I do not doubt that also lively works and cheerful poems can be produced and opposed to what I have said, but the greater number and the best of them certainly belong to the older period; and the newer works which may be counted of this character incline to satire, are bitter, and, in particular, treat women with contempt.

Enough, those serious poems, undermining human nature, which in general terms we have mentioned above, were the favourites which we sought out before all others; one, according to his disposition, seeking the lighter, elegiac melancholy, another the heavy, oppressive despair which gives up everything. Strangely enough, our father and teacher, Shakespeare, who so well understood how to diffuse a pure cheerfulness, even strengthened our feeling of dissatisfaction. Hamlet and his soliloquies were spectres which haunted all the young minds. The principal passages every one knew by heart and loved to recite, and every one believed that he had the right to be as melancholy as the Prince of Denmark, though he had seen no ghost and had no royal father to avenge.

But that a perfectly suitable locality should not be want-

ing to all this melancholy, Ossian had enticed us even to the "Ultima Thule," where on a gray, boundless heath, wandering among prominent moss-covered gravestones we saw the grass around us moved by a fearful wind, and above us a heavily clouded sky. It was not till moonshine that the Caledonian night became day; departed heroes, faded maidens, floated around us, until at last we really thought that we saw the spirit of Loda in his fearful form.<sup>1</sup>

In such an element, with such surroundings, with tastes and studies of this kind, tortured by unsatisfied passions, from without by no means excited to important actions, in the sole prospect of being obliged to adhere to a dull, spiritless, citizen life, we familiarised ourselves, in gloomy pride, with the thought that we could abandon life at our pleasure if it no longer suited us, and so, miserably enough, we helped ourselves through the disgusts and tedium of the day. This feeling was so general that "Werther" produced its great effect, because it everywhere struck a chord, and openly and intelligibly represented the inmost nature of a morbid, youthful delusion. How exactly the English were acquainted with this kind of wretchedness is shown by the few significant lines which were written before the appearance of "Werther":—

"To griefs congenial prone,  
More wounds than Nature gave he knew,  
While misery's form his fancy drew  
In dark ideal hues and horrors not its own."<sup>2</sup>

Suicide is an event of human nature which, whatever may be said and done with respect to it, demands the sympathy of every man, and in every epoch must be discussed anew. Montesquieu allows his heroes and great men the right of killing themselves as they think fit, for he says, it should be free to every one to close the fifth act of his tragedy as he pleases. But here it is not a question of such men as have led an important and active life, who have spent their days in the service of some great kingdom or in the cause of freedom; these we cannot blame if, when the idea which inspires them has left the earth, they should also wish to

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<sup>1</sup> Refers to the end of the first canto of Ossian's "Cath-Loda."

<sup>2</sup> From the "Suicide," by Joseph Warton, 1728-90. Professor of Poetry at Oxford, 1757.

follow it beyond the grave. Here we have to do with those who in the most peaceful circumstances in the world become disgusted with life through their own extravagant demands on themselves. As I was myself in that case, and best knew what pain I suffered and what exertions it cost me to escape from it, I will not conceal the reflections which I made with much deliberation on the various kinds of death which one might choose.

It is something so unnatural for a man to tear himself away from himself, not only to injure but to destroy himself, that he generally seizes upon some mechanical means of carrying out his design. When Ajax falls on his sword, it is the weight of his body which does him the last service. When the warrior<sup>1</sup> binds his shield-bearer not to let him fall into the hands of his enemies, it is an external power which he trusts in, only a moral instead of a physical one. Women seek in water the ending of their despair, and the extremely mechanical means of fire-arms makes sure of a speedy deed with the smallest amount of exertion. Hanging, one does not willingly mention, because it is an ignoble death. In England it may first be found, because from youth up they are accustomed to see so many people hanged, without the punishment being exactly dishonourable. By poison, by opening the veins, the idea is only to depart slowly from life, and the more refined, rapid, and painless death, that by an asp was worthy of a queen, who had passed her life in magnificence and pleasure. But all these are external aids, enemies with which man forms an alliance against himself.

When I reflected on all these means, and besides looked further into history, I found no one among all those who had killed themselves, who had accomplished this deed with such greatness and freedom of spirit as the Emperor Otho. He, as a general, had the worst of it, but was by no means driven to extremities, but decided for the good of the empire, which in some measure already belonged to him, and to spare the lives of so many thousands, to leave the world. He celebrates a cheerful supper with his friends, and the next morning one finds that he has driven a sharp dagger with his own hand through his heart. This deed

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<sup>1</sup> Alludes to Cassius.

alone seemed to me worthy of imitation, and I persuaded myself that whoever could not act as Otho had done, was not entitled voluntarily to leave the world. By this conviction I saved myself, not so much from the design as from the whim of suicide, which in those splendid times of peace, with an indolent youth, had managed to creep in. Amongst a considerable collection of weapons I had a costly and well-polished dagger. I always put this by my bed, and before I extinguished the light I tried if I could succeed in forcing the sharp point a couple of inches into my heart. But since I could never succeed in this, I at last laughed myself out of it, flung away all hypochondriacal silliness and decided to live. But to be able to do this with cheerfulness I had to bring to execution a poetic task, in which all that I had felt, thought, and fancied on this weighty point should be put into words. I gathered together for this purpose the elements which had been moving about around me for a couple of years; I brought to mind the things which had most oppressed and vexed me, but nothing would take shape; I wanted an incident, a story, in which all could be embodied.

All at once I hear the news of the death of Jerusalem,<sup>1</sup> and immediately after the general report, the most minute and circumstantial description of the event. At this moment the plan of "Werther" was found, the whole shot together from all sides and became a solid mass, like water in a vessel which is on the point of freezing is transformed into solid ice by the slightest agitation. To hold fast this strange prize, to keep before me, and carry out in all its parts a work of such varied and significant contents was for me so much the more pressing, as I had already again fallen into a painful situation which permitted me less hope than those which had gone before, and foreboded nothing but depression if not disgust.

It is always a misfortune to enter into new relations to which we are not accustomed. We are often against our will enticed into a false sympathy; the incompleteness of such circumstances gives us pain, but we see no means either of completing them or escaping from them. Frau von Laroche had married her eldest daughter in Frankfort,

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<sup>1</sup> This occurred, 30th October 1772.

whither she often came to visit her, but she could not reconcile herself with the condition which she herself had chosen. Instead of feeling comfortable in the situation, or endeavouring to make any alterations, she launched forth into complaints, so that it was impossible not to think that her daughter was really unhappy, though, as she wanted nothing, and her husband denied her nothing, it was not easy to see in what the unhappiness consisted. Meanwhile, I was well received in the house, and came in contact with the whole circle, which consisted of persons who had partly contributed to the marriage, and partly wished for it a happy result. The Dean of St Leonhard Dormnitz conceived a confidence, nay, a friendship for me. He was the first Catholic clergyman with whom I had come into close contact who, as he was a very clear-sighted man, gave me beautiful and satisfactory explanations of the external and internal relations, the faith and usages of the oldest church. I still recollect perfectly the figure of a well-formed, though not young, woman, Servières by name. I also came into contact with the Alessina-Schweigerchen family and with others, and into friendly relations with the sons, which long continued. I saw myself at once domesticated in a strange circle, and was induced, even compelled to take part in their employments, amusements, and even their religious exercises. My earlier relation with the young wife, which was, properly speaking, like that of brother and sister, was continued after the marriage; my age corresponded to hers, and I was the only person in the whole circle in whom she found an echo of those intellectual tones to which she had been accustomed from her youth up. We lived on together in a child-like trustfulness, and though there was no mixture of passion in our intercourse, yet it was painful enough, because she could not find herself sufficiently at home in her new surroundings. She was blessed with the goods of fortune, but, being transplanted from the beautiful valley of Ehrenbreitstein and from a joyous youth into a gloomily situated mercantile house, she had to act the part of mother to several stepchildren. In so many new family affairs I found myself confined, without any real share in their life and without co-operation. When they were content with one another, all seemed to go well enough, but most of the parties turned to me in vexatious

cases, which, by my lively sympathy, I usually made worse rather than better. It was not long before this situation became for me absolutely intolerable, and all the disgust at life which is wont to come from such incomplete relationships appeared to weigh upon me doubly and trebly, and I needed a new, strong determination to free myself from it. The death of Jerusalem, which was caused by his unhappy attachment to the wife of his friend, shook me out of my dreams. Not only the contemplation of what happened to him and to me, but the similar state in which I found myself at that moment, set me in a passionate excitement, so that I could not fail to breathe into that work which I had just begun all that glow that leaves no distinction between the poetical and the actual. Outwardly I had entirely isolated myself, forbidden the visits of my friends, and I put everything aside internally which did not immediately belong to the matter before me. On the other hand, I gathered together everything which had any connection with my design, and went over to myself the life I had recently been living, of the contents of which I had not yet made any poetic use. In such circumstances, and after so long and so many secret preparations, I wrote "Werther" in four weeks, without having previously put on paper a plan of the whole or the treatment of any part.

The manuscript, now finished, lay in the rough draft before me, with few corrections and alterations. It was at once fastened together, for the binding serves the book pretty much as the frame does a picture; one can see much better whether there is really anything in it. As I had written this little work almost unconsciously, like a somnambulist, I was myself astonished when I now went through it to alter and improve. Still in the expectation that after some time, when I could look at it as from a certain distance, much would occur to me which might be added to its advantage, I gave it to my younger friends to read, on whom it had so much the greater effect as, contrary to my usual custom, I had told no one of it beforehand, nor disclosed my intention of writing it. Yet here again it was the subject-matter which really produced the effect, and so they were in a state of mind exactly opposed to mine, for by this composition, more than by any other, I had saved myself from a stormy element, on which by

my own fault and that of others, by an accidental and voluntary way of life, by design and precipitation, by obstinacy and compliance, I had been driven hither and thither in the most violent manner. I felt myself again joyful and free, as if after a general confession, and justified in a new life. The old remedy had this time served me admirably. But while I felt myself eased and illuminated, by having changed reality into poetry, my friends were perplexed by the work, and thought one ought to change poetry into reality, and that they must imitate such a romance, and in any case blow their brains out. What thus in the beginning took place among a few, afterwards happened with the great public, and this little book, which had been so useful to me, was decried as being most harmful.

But all the evils and unhappiness which it is said to have produced<sup>1</sup> were accidentally almost prevented, as it ran the risk of being destroyed soon after its creation. The matter stood thus. Merck had returned from St Petersburg shortly before. I had spoken to him but little, because he was always occupied, and only told him in the most general terms of this "Werther" which lay so near my heart. Once he visited me, and as he did not seem very conversational, I asked him to listen to me. He sat down on the sofa, and I began to read him the story letter by letter. After I had continued for a time, without drawing from him any sign of approval, I took a more pathetic line. What were my feelings when, after I had made a pause, he cast me down most terribly with a "Well, that's quite pretty," and, without adding anything further, retired. I was quite beside myself, for as at first I had pleasure in my things, but had no judgment about them, I thought for certain that I had gone wrong in the subject, the tone, the style, all of which were doubtful, and composed something quite inadmissible. Had there been an open fire-place at hand, I should at once have flung the work into it, but I mastered myself and passed several painful days, till at last he confided to me that he was at that moment in the most dreadful condition in which a man can get. He had, therefore, neither seen nor heard anything, and had no idea what my manuscript was

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<sup>1</sup> "Werther" was published in September 1774.



about. In the meantime the matter was set right, as far as that was possible, and Merck, in the times of his energy, was just the man to accommodate himself to everything extraordinary, his humour returned, but he had become more bitter than before. He blamed my plan of rewriting "Werther" with harsh expressions, and wanted to see it printed as it was. Accordingly, a clean manuscript was prepared, which did not long remain in my hands, for by chance on the same day on which my sister married George Schlosser, and the house was illuminated and astir with joyful activity, there came a letter from Weygand, of Leipsic, asking me for a manuscript. Such a coincidence I held to be a favourable omen. I sent off "Werther," and was very well satisfied when the remuneration I received for it was not entirely swallowed up by the debts which I had been obliged to contract on account of "Götz von Berlichingen." The effect of this little book was great, indeed immense, and especially because it exactly hit the right moment. For as it only needs a small priming powder to blow up a powerful mine, so the explosion which took place among the public was mighty, because the youthful world had already undermined itself. The convulsion was so great because every one with his exaggerated demands, unsatisfied passions, and imaginary sorrows broke out. It cannot be expected from the public that it should receive an intellectual work intellectually. Actually only the contents, the material were regarded, as I had already experienced with my friends, and together with that came the old prejudice, springing from the dignity of a printed book, namely, that it must have a didactic purpose. But the true representation of life has no such purpose. It neither approves nor blames, but unfolds ideas and actions in their sequence, and thereby enlightens and teaches. Of the reviews I took little notice. The thing, as far as I was concerned, was completely finished; those good people might now see how they could come to terms with it. Yet my friends did not fail to collect these things and, as they were initiated into my views, to make themselves merry over them. The "Joys of the Young Werther," with which Nicolai came forth, gave us occasion for much jesting. This otherwise excellent man, rich in merit and in knowledge, had already begun to depreciate everything, and to put on one side

everything which did not accord with his own way of thinking, which he, though very limited intellectually, regarded as the only genuine one. He had also to make an attempt against me, and that pamphlet soon came into our hands. The very tender vignette of Chodowiecki gave me much pleasure, as I at that time had an excessive admiration for that artist. The bungling work itself was cut out of the coarse domestic linen, which the human understanding in his family circle puts itself to much trouble to make sufficiently solid. Without feeling that here there was nothing to modify, that Werther's youthful bloom appears from the first pierced by the deadly worm, the author allows my treatment of the subject to pass current up to the two hundred and fourteenth page, and when the desolate mortal is preparing for the fatal step, the keen-eyed psychical physician contrives to foist upon his patient a pistol loaded with hen's blood, which produces a filthy spectacle but no damage. Lotte becomes Werther's wife, and the whole thing ends to the satisfaction of every one.

So much I can recollect, for it never again came before my eyes. The vignette I had cut out and put among my favourite engravings. Then by way of a quiet and harmless revenge I composed a little satirical poem, "Nicolai at Werther's Grave," which cannot be communicated. The desire here, too, of giving everything a dramatic shape became active again. I wrote a prosaic dialogue between Lotte and Werther, which turned out fairly comical. Werther complains bitterly that his deliverance by hen's blood has come off so badly. He remains, indeed, with his life, but has shot out his eyes. Now he is in despair of being her husband and not being able to see her, as for him the sight of her whole being would be almost dearer to him than the sweet personal details of which he could assure himself by the touch. Lotte, as might be known, is not much helped by a blind husband, and so there is occasion for blaming considerably Nicolai's beginning, because he had interfered in other people's affairs without being asked. The whole was written with good humour, and described with free prophecy that unfortunate, conceited effort of Nicolai's to meddle with things to which he was not equal, by which he caused much trouble to himself and others in the sequel,

and finally thereby completely lost his literary reputation, in spite of his decided merits. The original of this jest was never copied, and has been worn out for many years. I had a special predilection for the little production. The pure, ardent affection of the two young persons was rather heightened than weakened by the comico-tragic situation into which they were transformed. The greatest tenderness prevailed throughout, and even their adversary was not treated bitterly, only humorously. I did not let the book itself speak quite so politely; imitating an old rhyme it thus expressed itself:—

“ Let arrogance speak out through him,  
 Me dangerous declaring  
 The clumsy dunce that cannot swim  
 At the water falls a-swearing;  
 That Berlin pack of priestly fools,  
 What care I how they brand me?  
 Let them learn to read in better schools  
 Till they can understand me.”

As I was prepared beforehand for everything that might be brought against “Werther,” I found so many attacks in no way vexatious. I had not, however, considered that an intolerable torment was prepared for me by well-meaning sympathising souls. For every one, instead of saying polite things about my little book as it was, wished to know once for all what was really true in it; at this I became very angry, and for the most part expressed myself with great discourtesy. For, in order to answer this question, I should have had to pull to pieces my little work, on which I had thought so long, in order to give a poetic unity to so many elements and so destroy its form. In this process the essential elements, when not destroyed, would have been scattered and dissipated. When looked at more closely I could not, however, take amiss this demand of the public. Jerusalem’s fate had made a great sensation. A cultivated, amiable, blameless young man, son of one of our first divines and writers, healthy and well-to-do, suddenly, without known cause, disappeared from the world. Every one now asked how this was possible, and when his unfortunate love affair was understood, the whole body of youth was excited, and also the middle class, when one spoke of the little vexations

which he had met with in aristocratic society, and every one wished to have more exact particulars. Now there appeared in "Werther" a particular description, as it was thought, of the life and character of the above-named young man. The locality and person tallied, and with the great naturalness of the narrative, people thought themselves completely informed and satisfied. But, on the other hand, with closer consideration, there was much which did not suit the facts, and there arose for those who sought for the truth an intolerable employment, because an analytical criticism must excite a hundred doubts. But one could not get to the bottom of the matter, for that which I had interwoven in the composition of my own life and suffering could not be deciphered, because as an unknown young man my course had been pursued not secretly, indeed, but in silence.

In my work it was not unknown to me how much that artist was favoured to whom the opportunity was given of studying a Venus from many beauties. Accordingly, I allowed myself to form my Lotte from the figure and qualities of several lovely children, though the main features were taken from the dearest of them. The inquiring public could therefore discover likenesses to various ladies, and for the ladies, too, it was not a matter of indifference whether they passed for the right one. These numerous Lottes caused me infinite trouble, as every one who saw me definitely wanted to know where the true one lived. I endeavoured to help myself, like Nathan, with the three rings, by an evasion which might indeed content higher beings, but would not satisfy the credulous or the reading public. I hoped after a time to be free from these troublesome inquiries, but they accompanied me throughout my whole life. I endeavoured on journeys to save myself by travelling incognito, but even this remedy was in vain, contrary to my expectation, and so the author of that little work, if he had done anything wrong or hurtful in it, was sufficiently, indeed excessively, punished for it by such unavoidable importunities. Harassed in this way, he became all too well aware that authors and the public are separated by an immense gulf, of which neither of them, fortunately, have any idea. How useless, therefore, all prefaces were, he had known for a long time. For the more the writer intends to make his purpose clear, the greater

occasion he gives for perplexity. An author may make his preface as long as he will, the public will always continue to make of him the demands which he has already endeavoured to avoid. I was early acquainted with a kindred peculiarity of readers, which strikes us quite comically, especially in those who let their opinions be printed. They live, indeed, under the delusion that if one has produced anything, he becomes their debtor, and always remains far behind that which they wished and expected, though a short time before they had seen the work they had no sort of idea that any such thing was in existence or could possibly be. But leaving all this aside, it was not the greatest fortune or misfortune that every one wished to make the acquaintance of this singular young author who had so unexpectedly and boldly come upon the stage. People wanted to see him, to speak to him, even at a distance to hear something from him, and so he had to live among a crowd of important people, which was sometimes pleasant, sometimes disagreeable, but always distracting. For there lay before him works already begun, enough to keep him busy for several years, if he could have kept himself to them with his old fervour. But he was dragged forth from the quiet, the twilight, the obscurity, which alone can be favourable to pure creations, into the clamour of the light of day, where one is lost in others, where one is led astray by sympathy as well as by coldness, by praise as well as by blame, because these external contacts never correspond with the epoch of our inner culture, and therefore, as they cannot advance us, must necessarily do us harm.

Still more than all the distractions of the day the author was kept from the elaboration and completion of larger works by the desire to dramatise everything of any importance which happened in that society. What this technical term (for such it was in that creative society) properly meant, must here be explained. Excited by intellectual gatherings on the most cheerful days, we accustomed ourselves to divide up into short extemporaneous performances all the materials which we had gathered together for the construction of larger compositions. A single simple incident, a pleasantly naïve or even silly word, a blunder, a paradox, a clever remark, personal peculiarities or habits, a significant look, and whatever else would occur in a gay and bustling life,

all were represented in the form of a dialogue, a catechism, a passing action, a play, often in prose, oftener in verse. By this practice, carried on with passion and genius, that really poetic mode of thought was established. We allowed objects, events, persons to stand as they were in themselves and in all relations, and only endeavoured to grasp them clearly and to copy them vividly. Every judgment, whether of approval or disapproval, was to pass before the eyes of the spectators in living forms. These productions might be termed animated epigrams, which, though without edge or points, were richly furnished with decided and striking features. The "Jahrmarktsfest" (the Fair Festival) is such an epigram, or rather a collection of such epigrams. All the characters there introduced are actual living members of that society, or persons at least connected and in some degree known to it, but the meaning of the riddle was concealed to most of them; all laughed, and few knew that their own special peculiarities served as the jest. The prologue to Bahrtdt's "Newest Revelations" passed for a document of another kind; the smallest are among the miscellaneous poems, very many have been destroyed or lost, and many of the remainder are not suitable for publication.<sup>1</sup> Those which appeared in print only increased the excitement of the public and the curiosity as to the author; that which was communicated in manuscript enlivened the immediate circle, which was constantly increasing. Doctor Bahrtdt, at that time in Giessen, visited me, with apparent politeness and confidence; he laughed about the prologue, and wished to be on friendly terms. But we young people continued to attend no social party without enjoying with a silent malicious pleasure the peculiarities which we had noticed in others, and successfully represented.

It was by no means displeasing to the young author to be stared at as a literary meteor. At the same time he endeavoured joyfully and modestly to show his respect for the most esteemed men of his country, among whom before all others the admirable Justus Möser is to be mentioned. The small "Essays" of this incomparable man on national subjects had for some years been printed in the *Osnabrück Intelligenzblätter*, and had been made known to me by

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<sup>1</sup> E.g., "The Clown's Wedding."

Herder, who overlooked nothing which was of worth in his time, but especially if it appeared in print. Möser's daughter, Frau von Voights, was occupied in collecting these scattered papers. We could hardly wait for their publication, and I put myself in communication with her to assure her with sincere sympathy that the essays which were regarded as effective for a limited circle, both as regards matter and form, would everywhere be useful and profitable. She and her father received with great kindness this expression of a stranger, who was not quite unknown, as a cause of anxiety, which they had felt, was removed by this provisional declaration.

These little essays, which were all written with the same idea, make a complete whole, showing the most intimate knowledge of civic life in the highest degree remarkable and praiseworthy. We see a constitution resting on the past and yet still in vigorous existence. On the one hand, a fast hold is kept of tradition ; on the other, movement and change in things cannot be hindered. Here there is fear of a useful innovation, there one sees joy and pleasure in what is new, though it should be useless and injurious. With what freedom from prejudice does the writer explain the relationship of the different ranks as well as the relation in which cities, town, and villages mutually stand. We learn their prerogatives at the same time as the legal grounds of the same ; it is made known to us where the main capital of the State is invested and what interest it brings in. We see property and its advantages on the one hand, on the other, taxes and disadvantages of various kinds, and then the most manifold profits ; in all this alike, former and present times are contrasted.

Osnabrück, as a member of the Hanseatic league, we find in the earlier period having a great commercial activity. For the conditions of those times it had a remarkable and fine situation ; it can receive the products of the country, and is not too far from the sea to be able to trade there also. But now, in more recent times, it lies far in the interior of the country, and is gradually removed and shut off from trade by sea. How this has taken place is set out in all its bearings. Here the struggle of England with the cities of the coast is spoken of, and of the harbours and the interior ; here are set forth the great advantages of those who dwell by the

sea, and serious plans are proposed by which the inhabitants of the interior might acquire the same. Then we learn much about trade and handicrafts, and how such are surpassed by manufactures, and how they are undermined by retail trade ; we see the decline as the result of many causes, and this result again as the cause of a new decline in an endless circle difficult to unravel ; yet the vigorous citizen sets it out so clearly, that we still think we can save ourselves from the condition. The author throughout displays the most profound insight into the most minute circumstances. His plans, his advice, nothing is invented, and yet they are often impracticable, and therefore he even called them the collection of "patriotic fancies," though everything in it is based on what is real and possible.

But, since now everything in public life rests on the institution of the family, he turns his attention especially to that. As objects of serious and playful reflection we find changes in manners and customs, in dress, diet, domestic life, education. One would have to mark everything in the civic and moral world if one wishes to exhaust the subjects of which he treats. And this treatment of his is admirable. A perfect man of business addresses the people in weekly papers, in order to bring within the comprehension of every one on its right side whatever a wise and beneficent government proposes or carries out, not in a didactic manner, but in the most varied forms, which might be called poetic, and which in the best sense of the word must be considered rhetorical. He is always elevated above his subject and understands how to convey to us a cheerful view of the most serious things. Half-hidden now behind this mask, now behind that, now speaking in his own person, always completely exhausting the subject, and besides always in good humour, more or less ironical, everywhere vigorous, honest, well-meaning, often rough and vehement ; all this in such just proportions that one must at last marvel at the spirit, understanding, facility, skill, taste, and character of the writer. In judgment as to the choice of generally interesting subjects, profound insight, enlarged view, felicitous treatment, with humour as cheerful as profound, I can compare him with no one but Franklin.

Such a man had an improving effect upon me, and the greatest influence on a youthful generation, which demanded



something vigorous, and stood ready to comprehend it. In the forms of his delivery we thought we could make ourselves at home, but who could hope to master such rich contents and to handle the most refractory subject with so much ease?

Yet this is our fairest and sweetest delusion, which we cannot give up, however much pain it may cause us through life, that we would, where possible, appropriate to ourselves, nay, even from ourselves produce and exhibit that which we prize and revere in others.

## BOOK XIV

WITH that movement which now extended through the public there was another, perhaps of greater significance for the author, as it took place in his immediate neighbourhood. His earlier friends, who had already known in manuscript those poems which now made so great a sensation, and for that reason regarded them partly as their own, triumphed at the excellent success which they had been bold enough to prophesy. To them were added new sympathisers, especially such as perceived a creative power in themselves or wished to call it forth and cherish it.

Among the first stands out Lenz, prominently, as the most lively and the most singular. The exterior of this remarkable man I have already sketched, and mentioned with affection his humorous talents; now I will speak of his character more in its results than descriptively, as it would be impossible to follow him through the meandering course of his life and to deliver a representation of his peculiarities.

We know that kind of self-torment, which, apart from any outward necessities, was the order of the day, and which disquieted the best minds. That which troubles ordinary men, who never observe themselves, only transiently, that which they seek to banish from their thoughts, was by the more cultivated, carefully noted, regarded, and preserved in writings, letters, and diaries. But now they joined the most strict moral requirements of themselves and others to the greatest negligence in action, and a self-conceit, arising from this half self-knowledge, led them astray into the strangest habits and bad conduct. But in such a labouring in self-examination they were, however, supported by the rising empirical psychology, which, if it does not declare everything which causes us inward disquiet to be wicked and reprehensible, still could not approve of it, and there was stirred up an endless and inappeasable strife. In

guiding this style and keeping it going, Lenz excelled all the other idlers who were busied in undermining their own inner selves. Thus he suffered in general from the spirit of the time, which was said to have been let loose by the delineation of Werther, but an individual style distinguished him from all the others, whom one had to recognise as being thoroughly frank and honest souls. He had, indeed, a decided inclination for intrigue, and, indeed, for intrigue for its own sake, without having any special ends in view, reasonable, attainable, or selfish. It was rather his custom always to propose to himself something whimsical, which, for that very reason, served him for a constant entertainment. In this way he was all his life a rogue in his imagination; his love as well as his hate were imaginary: with his ideas and feelings he proceeded arbitrarily, so that he might always have something to do. By the most perverse means he endeavoured to give reality to his attractions and repulsions, and always himself destroyed his own work. Thus he had never benefited anyone whom he loved, nor injured anyone whom he hated. In general, he seemed only to sin in order to punish himself, and only to intrigue in order to graft a new fable upon an old one.

His talent came from a real depth, from inexhaustible creative power, in which tenderness, versatility, and subtlety rivalled each other, but with all its beauty it was sickly at every point, and it is just these talents which are the most difficult to form a judgment about. In his works one cannot fail to recognise features of greatness; a charming delicacy steals along through the silliest and oddest pieces of nonsense, that they can hardly be forgiven even to a humour so deep and unassuming as his, and to so true a gift for the comic. His days were made up of mere nothings, to which he managed to give a meaning by his activity. And he could waste away many hours, as by a happy memory the time which he devoted to reading was always fruitful, and his original way of thinking was enriched with various materials. He had been sent to Strasburg with some Livonian gentlemen, and a more unfortunate mentor could hardly have been chosen. The elder baron went back for a time to his native land, and left behind a lady-love to whom he was attached: Lenz, in order to keep back the second brother, who was also paying court to this lady as well as other

lovers, and to preserve the precious heart for his absent friend, determined to pretend that he had fallen in love with her, or even actually to do so. He carried through this plan with the most obstinate adherence to the ideal he had formed of her, without wishing to be aware that he, as well as the others, only served her for jest and entertainment. So much the better for him ! For him, too, it was only a game, which could last longer, as she answered him in the same spirit of sport, now attracting, now repelling him, now calling him forward, now setting him aside. People were convinced that if he had come to a consciousness of how the thing sometimes went on he would have congratulated himself heartily on such a discovery.

As for the rest, he lived mostly, like his pupils, with officers of the garrison, where he may have got hold of the strange notions which he afterwards brought out in his comedy, "The Soldiers." Meanwhile the early acquaintance with military life had the peculiar effect for him that he regarded himself as a great judge of martial affairs. He had actually, by degrees, studied this subject so much in detail that some years afterwards he prepared a long memorandum for the French Minister of War, from which he promised himself the best results. The faults of that military condition were fairly well seen ; the remedies, on the other hand, were ridiculous and impracticable. But he remained convinced that he should by this means gain great influence with the court, and was not at all grateful to his friends who, partly by reasoning, partly by active opposition, restrained him so that he kept back and afterwards burnt this fantastic work which was already neatly copied, accompanied with a letter, put in an envelope, and formally addressed.

Orally and afterwards by letter, he had confided to me all the mazes of his movements hither and thither with regard to the lady before mentioned. The poetry which he knew how to infuse into the commonest things often astonished me, so that I urged him to put the essence of this long-winded adventure to intellectual profit and to form a little romance out of it : but that was not his line ; he could only succeed when he poured himself out on some particular thing without limit, and spun an endless thread without any plan. Perhaps it may in some way be possible

from these premises to put together an account of his life, up to the time when he lost his reason. At present I keep myself to the next subject, which actually belongs here.

"Götz von Berlichingen" had scarcely appeared when Lenz sent me a diffuse essay written on small copy paper, which he commonly used, without leaving the least margin at the top or bottom or sides. This was entitled "On Our Marriage," and were it now at hand, might enlighten us more than it did me at that time, for I was still in the dark as to him and his character. The main idea of this discursive writing was to compare my talents with his own, now he seemed to subordinate himself to me, now to place himself as equal to me, but all this was done with such humorous and neat turns of expression that I gladly received the view which he intended to give me by it, all the more because I valued very highly the gifts he actually possessed, and always urged him to concentrate, and instead of aimlessness to use his innate gift of creation according to the rules of Art. I replied to his confidence in the most friendly way, and as, in his pages, he had pressed for the most intimate relation (as the strange title already indicates) so I communicated to him everything that I had finished and what I had designed. He, on the other hand, gradually sent me his manuscripts: the "Hofmeister," the "New Menoza," the "Soldiers," the "Imitations of Plautus," and the translation from an English play as an addition to his remarks upon the theatre.

Among these it struck me in some measure that in a laconic preface he declared that the contents of this essay, which was directed with vehemence against the regular stage, had already some years before been read to a company of the friends of literature at a time when "Götz von Berlichingen" had not yet been written; among Lenz's Strasburg relations, a literary circle with which I was not acquainted. This seemed somewhat problematical. But I let it pass, and soon procured publishers for this and other writings of his, without having the least idea that he had destined me for the special object of his imaginary hatred, and as the mark of his adventures and fanciful persecution.

In passing, for the sake of what follows, I will just mention a good fellow, who, though of no exceptional gifts, must

be included with the others. He was called Wagner,<sup>1</sup> first a member of our Strasburg then of our Frankfort society, a man not without spirit, talent, and education. He showed himself to be zealous, and so was welcome. He kept loyally to me, and as I made no secret of my projects I told him as well as the others of my intention with regard to "Faust," especially the catastrophe of Gretchen. He grasped the subject and made use of it for a tragedy, "The Child Murderess." It was the first time that anyone had stolen any of my plans ; it vexed me, though I did not bear him any grudge for it. Since then I have often enough experienced such robberies and anticipations of my thoughts. With my delays and habit of talking about so many things that I had proposed and imagined, I had no right to complain.

If orators and writers are pleased to make use of contrasts, even when they are sought from a far-fetched distance, in consequence of the great effect which they produce, so it must be all the more agreeable to the present writer that a decided contrast offers itself to him when he has to speak of that between Lenz and Klinger. They were both of the same age, and in their youth worked with and beside each other. Lenz, however, as a transient meteor, passed only momentarily over the horizon of German literature, and vanished suddenly without leaving any trace in life behind. Klinger, on the contrary, as an influential writer and an active man of affairs, maintains himself up to the present time. I will now speak of him as far as is necessary, without a further comparison which suggests itself, for it is not in secret that he has accomplished so much, and had so much influence, but both in nearer and more distant circles he stands well remembered and in good esteem.

Klinger's exterior, for I always like to start from this, was very prepossessing. Nature had endowed him with a tall, slender, well-built figure and regular features ; he was careful of his appearance, dressed neatly, and might have claimed to be the best-looking member of the whole small society. His behaviour was neither complaisant nor distant, but mild, when not in an inward state of agitation.

In a girl we love what she is, in a young man what he

promises, and so I was Klinger's friend when I got to know him. He recommended himself by a pure good nature, and an undeniably decided character obtained for him confidence. From youth up he was inclined to earnestness. Besides a beautiful and excellent sister he had to care for a mother who, as a widow, had need of such children to support her. Everything that he was, he had procured for himself, so that no one could grudge a trait of proud independence which was noticeable in his bearing. Decided natural aptitudes, common to all well-endowed men, power of rapid comprehension, an excellent memory, facility of speech he possessed in a high degree, but all these he appeared to regard as of less value than the firmness and perseverance which were innate with him, and which had been fully strengthened by circumstances.

To a young man of such a character the works of Rousseau were specially suited. "Emile" was his first and last book, and those ideas had all the more effect with him as they exercised a general influence throughout the whole cultivated world, and upon him more than upon others. For he, too, was a child of Nature; he, too, had begun from the bottom. What others had had to throw away, he had never possessed; conditions from which they required to preserve themselves had never confined him, and so he could be regarded as one of the purest disciples of that gospel of Nature, and in view of his serious efforts, of his behaviour as a man and a son, he might well exclaim: "All is good, as it comes from the hands of Nature." But also the conclusion, "All is made worse in the hands of men," was forced upon him by an adverse experience. He had not to struggle with himself, but beyond himself with the world of tradition, from whose fetters the citizen of Geneva thought to set us free. Now, because in the condition of this young man the struggle was often difficult and bitter, he felt himself more violently driven back into himself, so that he could not attain to a thoroughly joyous and happy development. Rather he had to press on and storm through,<sup>1</sup> and so a trait of bitterness crept into his character, which he afterwards partly cherished and nurtured, but for the most part fought against and overcame.

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<sup>1</sup> An allusion to Klinger's play, "Sturm und Drang."

In his works, so far as I can remember them, there is displayed a strong understanding, a sense of uprightness, a lively imagination, a happy perception of the varieties of mankind, and a characteristic imitation of generic differences. His girls and boys are free and loving, his youths ardent, his men simple and intelligent, the figures which he represents in an unfavourable light are not too exaggerated. He is not lacking in cheerfulness and good temper, wit, and happy conceits ; allegories and symbols are at his command ; he knows how to entertain and amuse us, and the enjoyment would be still purer if he did not here and there spoil his gay significant jesting both for himself and us by a bitter ill will. Yet this it is which makes him what he is, and thereby the modes of living and writing are so manifold that every one wavers hither and thither theoretically between knowledge and ignorance, practically between creation and destruction.

Klinger belongs to those who have formed themselves for the world out of themselves, out of their own feelings and understanding. Because this took place with and among a great multitude, and because among one another they made use with power and effect of an intelligible language flowing out of universal nature and the peculiar character of the people, they were always both earlier and later most hostile to all academic forms, especially when such were separated from their living origin, degenerated into phrases, and thus totally lost their first fresh significance. Such men declare themselves against new opinions, views, and systems, also against new events and rising men of importance who announce or effect great changes. For this procedure they should in no way be censured, for they see that to be endangered to which they are indebted for their own existence and culture.

That perseverance of a capable character becomes all the more worthy of respect when it is maintained throughout a life in the world and business, and when a manner of treating current events, which to many might seem harsh and masterful, when applied at the right time leads most surely to the end. This was the case with him, as without pliability (which has never been the virtue of the born citizen of the empire), but, therefore, the more vigorously, surely, and honourably he raised himself to posts of import-



ance, knew how to maintain himself there, and advanced with the approbations and favour of his highest patrons, but he never forgot his old friends, or the paths he had left behind. Indeed, he endeavoured pertinaciously to maintain the most complete constancy of remembrance through all degrees of absence and separation ; certainly it deserves to be remarked that he, like another Williger,<sup>1</sup> did not disdain to perpetrate on his coat of arms, which was adorned with several orders, tokens of his earlier career.

It was not long before I became acquainted with Lavater. "The Letter of a Pastor to his Colleagues"<sup>2</sup> had enlightened him in some passages a good deal, for much of it harmonised completely with his own ideas. With his ceaseless activity our correspondence soon became very lively. He made serious preparations for his great work on "Physiognomy," the introduction to which had already come before the public. He demanded of all the world to send him drawings and silhouettes, but especially pictures of Christ, and though I could do as good as nothing in this way, he wanted once for all to have from me a sketch of the Saviour, as I represented him to myself. Such demands for the impossible gave me occasion for many kinds of jest, and I did not know how to defend myself against his peculiarities except by bringing forward my own.

The number of those who did not believe in physiognomy, or at least regarded it as uncertain and deceptive, was very great, and even many who meant well, with Lavater, felt a desire to try him and, where possible, to play him a trick. He had ordered at Frankfort from a painter, by no means unskilled, the profiles of several well-known men. The agent permitted himself the joke of first sending Bahrdt's portrait instead of mine, in return for which there came back an epistle, lively indeed, but full of thunder, with all kinds of expletives and asseverations that this was not my picture, together with everything else that Lavater might have to say on this occasion in confirmation of his doctrine of physiognomy. My real likeness, which was sent afterwards, he allowed to pass, but even here appeared the opposition into which he fell with painters and with indi-

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<sup>1</sup> He was Archbishop of Mainz, the son of a wheelwright, and had a wheel on his armorial bearings.

<sup>2</sup> Published in 1773.

viduals. The former could never work for him with sufficient truth and exactitude; the latter, whatever excellencies they might have, were always too far behind the idea which he cherished of humanity and of men to prevent his being repelled by the special characteristics which constitute the individuality of a person.

The conception of humanity which he had formed upon himself and his own humanity was so exactly related to the living idea of Christ, which he cherished within himself, that he could not understand how a man could live and breathe without at the same time being a Christian. My relation to Christianity lay only in my understanding and feelings, and I had not the least conception of that physical affinity to which Lavater inclined. I was therefore annoyed by the violent importunity with which a man, so full of mind and heart, went at myself, Mendelssohn, and others. Every one must either be a Christian with him, a Christian in his manner, or that one should bring him over to himself and convince him of that very thing in which one had found peace. This demand, so directly opposed to that liberal spirit of the man of the world to which I was gradually tending, did not have the best effect upon me. All attempts at conversion, when they do not succeed, make him who has been selected for a proselyte obdurate and impenitent, and this was all the more the case with me when Lavater at last came out with the hard dilemma: "Either Christian or Atheist." I thereupon declared that if he would not leave me my Christianity, such as I had hitherto cherished it, I could well decide myself for Atheism, especially as I saw that no one knew precisely what either meant.

This writing backwards and forwards, vehement as it was, did not disturb our good relationship. Lavater had incredible patience, pertinacity, and endurance; he was sure of his teaching, and with his determined plan to spread his conviction in the world, he was willing to carry through by waiting and gentleness that which could not be brought about by force. Above all, he belonged to those few fortunate men whose outward vocation completely harmonises with the inner one, and whose earliest culture, steadily combining with the later, develops their faculties in accordance with Nature. Born with the most tender moral disposition, he destined himself to be a clergyman. He enjoyed the

necessary instruction, and displayed many talents without, however, inclining to that kind of development which is called learned. For he, too, though born much earlier than I, was seized upon by the spirit of Freedom and Nature which belonged to the time, and which whispered flatteringly into every ear : “ You have within yourself enough materials and power without much outward assistance ; it is only a question of your unfolding them in a suitable way.” The duty of the clergyman to work upon men morally, in the ordinary sense, and religiously from a higher point of view, fully harmonised with his modes of thought. His most decided impulse as a young man was to impart to men, and to excite in them, his own honest and pious sentiments, and his favourite occupation was the observation of himself and others. The former was made very easy, or rather forced upon him by an inward tenderness, the latter by a keen glance at externals. For contemplation, however, he was not born, he had no gift for representing things in their appropriate sense ; he felt himself rather, with all his powers, impelled to activity, to actuality, so that I have never known anyone who was ever more uninterruptedly in action than he. But because an inward moral nature is incorporated in outward conditions, so that we belong to a family, a class, a guild, a city, or a state, he was obliged to come in contact with all these external things and to set them in motion in so far as he wished to have influence. Hence arose many a collision, many a perplexity, especially as the commonwealth of which he was born a member enjoyed an admirable tradition of freedom under the most exact and definite limitations. The republican boy soon accustoms himself to think and talk about public affairs. In the first bloom of his days he sees himself as a member of a guild, soon in the position of giving or withholding his vote. If he wishes to judge justly and independently he must, before all things, convince himself of the worth of his fellow-citizens, he must learn to know them, he must inquire after their sentiments, their powers, and thus while he aims at understanding others, he always comes back to his own bosom.

Lavater exercised himself in such conditions, and this kind of active life seems to have occupied him more than the study of language and that analytic criticism which is allied to it and is its basis as well as its aim. In later years,

when his knowledge and views had been infinitely extended, he said often enough in jest and in earnest that he was not a learned man. And indeed it is to this deficiency of thorough study that one must ascribe the fact that he clung to the letter of the Bible, and even to its translation, and, indeed, for that which he sought and designed he found in it sufficient nourishment and assistance.

But very soon that slowly moving circle of action of a guild or corporation was too narrow for his lively nature. To be upright is not difficult for youth, and a pure conscience revolts at the wrong of which it has not yet made itself guilty. The oppressions of a provincial governor (Landvogt) lay open before the eyes of the citizens, but it was more difficult to bring them to justice. Lavater joined a friend to himself, and both anonymously threatened the guilty man. The matter became notorious, and an investigation was rendered necessary. The guilty man was punished, but those who occasioned this act of justice were blamed, if not abused. In a well-ordered state even right itself should not be brought about in a wrong way.

On a journey which Lavater made through Germany, he put himself in contact with learned and reflecting men, but he became confirmed only still more in his own thoughts and convictions ; when he had returned home he worked with even greater freedom from his own resources. As a noble and good man he was conscious of a lofty conception of humanity. Everything in experience which contradicts this conception, all the undeniable defects which lead every one away from perfection, were to be smoothed over by the idea of the Deity, which, in the midst of the ages, descended into human nature in order to restore completely its earlier image. So much at the outset of the beginnings of this remarkable man ; and now, before everything else, a cheerful picture of our first meeting and intercourse. For our correspondence had not lasted long when he announced to me and to others that in a journey along the Rhine, which he was about to take, he would soon visit Frankfort. At once there arose a great public excitement ; all were curious to see such a remarkable man ; many hoped to profit from him in this moral and religious culture ; the sceptics thought to distinguish themselves by significant objections ; the conceited were sure of entangling and

putting him to shame by arguments in which they had strengthened themselves. There was all else designed and accidental which awaits a distinguished man who intends to go about in this medley of a world.

Our first meeting was cordial ;<sup>1</sup> we embraced each other in the most friendly way, and I found him just as so many portraits had already shown him to me. I saw living and actually before me a unique individual, more remarkable than one had seen before, or will see again. He, on the other hand, betrayed in the first moment by some strange exclamations that he had expected me to be different. I assured him, hereupon, with my innate and cultivated realism, that as it had pleased God and Nature to make me in that way we would let ourselves be content with it. Now, indeed, at once came into our conversation the most important points about which we could least agree in our correspondence, but we had not time to discuss them thoroughly, and I experienced what had never come before me earlier.

We others, when we wished to speak about the affairs of the mind and heart, were wont to withdraw from the crowd, even indeed from society, because, in the manifold ways of thinking, and the different stages of culture, it is difficult to come to an understanding even with a few. But Lavater was quite of a different temperament ; he liked to extend his influence far and wide, and was not at ease except in company, for the instruction and entertainment of which he possessed an especial talent, which was based on his great gift of physiognomy. He had the power of correctly distinguishing persons and minds so that he quickly understood how every one felt. If there were added to this a sincere confession, a true-hearted inquiry, he was able from the great abundance of his inner and external experience to answer what was suitable to every one's satisfaction. The deep tenderness of his glance, the harmonious lovingness of his lips, even the honest Swiss dialect penetrating through his High German, and much else which distinguished him, gave to all to whom he spoke the most pleasant sense of calm. Even the slight bend forward in his figure, with his flat chest, contributed not a little to balance the superiority

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<sup>1</sup> Lavater entered Frankfort, June 1774.

of his presence with the remainder of the company. Towards arrogance and conceit he knew how to demean himself with calmness and address, for while he seemed to yield, he would suddenly bring forward a grand view of which his narrow-minded opponent would never have thought, like a diamond shield, and understood so agreeably how to moderate the light shining from it, that such men felt themselves instructed and convinced, at least in his presence. Perhaps with many the impression continued to be influential, for selfish men are sometimes also kindly ; it is only a question of the hard shell which encloses the fruitful kernal being softened by gentle influence.

What, on the other hand, caused him the greatest pain was the presence of such persons whose outward ugliness must stamp them irrevocably as decided enemies of that teaching of the significance of forms. They generally employed sufficient common sense, even other gifts and talents, passionately hostile and trivially sceptical, in order to weaken a doctrine which appeared insulting to their personality ; for one does not easily find anyone so magnanimous as Socrates, who turned his satyr-like exterior to the aid of the morality he had acquired. For Lavater the hardness and obduracy of such antagonists was horrible, his opposition was not without passion, as the smelting fire must attack the resisting ore as something troublesome and hostile.

In such circumstances a confidential conversation, such as would have related to ourselves, was not to be thought of. Though I was very much instructed by observing the way in which he treated men, I was not improved by it, for my position was quite different from his. He who works morally loses none of his efforts, for there comes from them much more than the parable of the sower all too moderately represents ; but he who proceeds in an artistic fashion has lost everything in every work of art, unless it is recognised as such. Now, it is known how impatient my dear sympathising readers were accustomed to make me, and for what reasons I was most indisposed to explain myself to them. At this time I felt only too much the difference between my own activity and that of Lavater ; his was effective in his presence, mine in my absence. Every one who was dissatisfied with him at a distance became his

friend when they came near together, and every one, who from my works thought I was an object of affection, was very much disappointed when he came in contact with a stiff, reserved man.

Merck, who had at once come over from Darmstadt, played the part of Mephistopheles, and especially mocked at the crowd of women ; and when some of them examined with attention the room which had been vacated for the prophet, and above all the bedroom, the wag said : " The pious souls wished to see where they had laid the Lord." For all that he had to let himself be examined as well as the others ; for Lips, who accompanied Lavater, drew his profile as completely and well as his pictures of other men of importance and no importance, which were to be brought together in the great work on " Physiognomy."

As far as I was concerned my intercourse with Lavater was highly important and instructive ; his pressing incitements to action brought my calm, artistic, contemplative nature into motion, not, indeed, to my advantage for the moment, because the distraction which had already taken hold of me was only increased thereby. But so many things were talked about between us that the greatest desire arose in me to continue this discussion. Accordingly, if he were to go to Ems, I decided to accompany him, so that on the road, shut up in the carriage and separated from the world, we might freely discuss those subjects which lay on both our hearts.

Meanwhile the conversations between Lavater and Fräulein von Klettenberg were for me very remarkable and of great consequence. Here two decided Christians stood in contrast to one another, and it was quite clear to see how the same belief varies according to the sentiments of different people. In those tolerant times one repeated so often that every man has his own religion and his own way of worshipping God. Though I did not exactly maintain this, I could, in the present case, observe that men and women require a different Saviour. Fräulein von Klettenberg looked towards hers as to a lover to whom one yields oneself unconditionally, sets all joy and hope on him alone, and to him entrusts the destiny of her life without doubt or hesitation. Lavater, on the other hand, treated his Saviour as a friend, whom one imitates without envy, and lovingly

acknowledges his merits and prizes them highly, and whom, for that reason, he strives to be like, nay, even to equal. What a difference between these two tendencies by which, in general, the spiritual necessities of the two sexes are expressed ! Hence it may be explained that men of tender natures turn to the Mother of God as a pattern of womanly beauty and virtue, and, like Sannazo,<sup>1</sup> have dedicated to her their life and talents, and incidentally have played with the Divine Child.

How my two friends stood to one another, and how they felt towards each other, I learnt not only from the conversations at which I was present, but also from the declaration which both made to me in private. I could not altogether agree with either one or the other, because my Christ had also taken his form according to my idea. Because they would not allow mine to pass at all I teased them with all sorts of paradoxes and extreme expressions, and when they became impatient, I withdrew from them with a jest.

The strife between knowledge and faith was not yet the order of the day, but the two words and the conceptions connected with them came forward occasionally, and the true despisers of the world said that the one was as unreliable as the other. Therefore, I took pleasure in declaring myself in favour of both, but without being able to win the assent of my friends. In the matter of faith, I said, everything depends on the fact of believing ; what one believes is completely indifferent. Faith is a profound feeling of security for the present and future, and this security arises from trust in an immense all-powerful and inscrutable Being. All depends on the unshakableness of this confidence, but how we think to ourselves of this Being depends on our other faculties, or even on circumstances, and is completely indifferent. Faith is a holy vessel into which every one stands ready to offer his feelings, his understanding, and his imagination as well as he can. With knowledge it is just the opposite ; it is not a question of knowing, but what we know, how much we know, and how well we know it. Therefore, one can dispute about knowledge because it can

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<sup>1</sup> A famous humanist and Italian poet, remarkable for his veneration for the Virgin Mary, which he expressed in his poem, "De partu Virginis."



be corrected, enlarged, and contracted. Knowledge begins with the particular, is without end and without form, can never be altogether comprehended except, at most, only in dreams, and therefore it remains the exact opposite of faith.

Such half-truths and the errors arising from them, when poetically represented, may be exciting and entertaining, but in ~~life~~ they disturb and confuse conversation. I therefore willingly left Lavater alone with all those who wished to be edified by him and through him, and for this renunciation I found myself sufficiently indemnified by the journey which we took together to Ems. Beautiful summer weather accompanied us ; Lavater was cheerful and most charming. For with the religious and moral, but in no way contracted direction of his mind, he was not insensitive, when, through the incidents of life, the moods of those about him were stirred to liveliness and gaiety. He was sympathetic, spirited, witty, and liked the same in others, provided they kept within the limits which his delicate sentiments prescribed. If anyone ventured beyond this, he was wont to clap him on the shoulder and call back the bold one to good manners by a cordial *Bisch Guet* (be good). This journey afforded me instruction and inspiration of many kinds, which helped more in the knowledge of his character than in the regulation and culture of my own. At Ems I saw him once again surrounded by society of every sort, and I returned to Frankfort, because my little affairs were in such a condition that I could scarcely leave them.

But I was not so speedily to return to repose, for Basedow<sup>1</sup> appeared, came in contact with me, and laid hold of me from another side. It was impossible to see a more decided contrast than there was between these two men. A glance at Basedow showed at once the difference. The features of Lavater displayed themselves openly to the spectator, those of Basedow were crowded together, and seemed drawn inwards. Lavater's eye was clear and devout, beneath very wide eyelids, but Basedow's was deep in his head, black, sharp, gleaming beneath shaggy eyebrows ; on the other hand, Lavater's frontal bone seemed encased in the arches of the softest brown hair. Basedow's vehement, rough voice, his quick, sharp expressions, a certain sarcastic laugh, a

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<sup>1</sup> 1723-99, the great school reformer.

swift change of subject in conversation, and everything else peculiar to him, all were opposed to the peculiarities and behaviour by which Lavater had spoilt us. Basedow, too, was very much sought after in Frankfort, and his great intellectual gifts admired, but he was not the man either to edify spirits or to guide them. His special business was to cultivate better that great field which he had marked out for himself, so that humanity might afterwards make their dwellings in it with greater ease and more in accordance with Nature, and with this end in view he hastened only with too great directness.

I could not altogether agree with his plans, or even render his views clear to myself. I was, of course, pleased with the idea of making all instruction living and adapted to Nature : that the ancient languages should be practised at the present time appeared to me laudable, and I gladly acknowledged what, in his conception, tended to the promotion of activity and a fresher view of the world. But I was displeased, because the designs of his elementary work were more inharmonious than the subjects themselves, since in the actual world only things which are possible stand together, and therefore, in spite of all variety and apparent confusion, the world has always a certain regularity in all its parts. But this elementary work, on the other hand, dissipates it completely, since things, which never are combined in the world, are put near to each other because of the relationship of ideas, therefore it lacks the advantages of a visible method, which we must recognise in the similar labours of Amos Comenius.<sup>1</sup>

But the behaviour of Basedow was much stranger and more difficult to understand than his doctrine. On this journey his object was, by his personal influence, to interest the public in his philanthropic enterprises and, indeed, to open not only their hearts but their purses. He knew how to speak grandly and persuasively of his project and every one willingly admitted what he declared. But in a most inexplicable way he wounded the feelings of the men whose assistance he wished to gain, in fact, he outraged them unnecessarily because he could not restrain his opinions and fancies on religious subjects. In this, too, Basedow

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<sup>1</sup> 1592-1670. Author of "The Orbis Pictus" mentioned in Book I.

appeared as the opposite of Lavater. While the latter received the Bible literally, and with its whole contents as being word for word in force and applicable down to the present day, the former had the most restless itching to make everything new, and to remodel both the doctrines and outward ceremonies of the church according to his own conceptions. He proceeded most unmercifully and imprudently with those ideas which do not come immediately from the Bible but from its interpretation, with those expressions, philosophically technical words or sensible allegories with which the Fathers of the Church and the councils sought to make clear to themselves, the unspeakable, or to confute heretics. In a hard and unanswerable way he proclaimed himself before every one as the most declared enemy of the Trinity, and could never leave off arguing against this universally admitted mystery. I, too, had to endure a good deal of this conversation in private talk, and was obliged to have the *hypostasis* and *ousia* as well as the *prosopon* brought before me again and again. Against this I seized the weapon of paradox, sailed above the flight of his opinions, and ventured to fight his rash assertions with something still more rash. This gave again fresh stimulus to my mind, and as Basedow was much more widely read, and had more skill in the tricks of disputation than a naturalist like myself, I had always to exert myself the more, the more important the points which were discussed between us.

Such a splendid opportunity for exercising, if not for enlightening my mind, I could not allow to pass away in a hurry. I empowered my father and friends to undertake the most necessary business, and set off again from Frankfort in the company of Basedow. But what a difference was I aware of when I thought of the charm which emanated from Lavater. Pure as he was, he created for himself an environment of purity. One became like a maiden by his side, so as not to touch him with anything contrary to his nature. Basedow, on the other hand, being far too much turned in upon himself, could not pay attention to his exterior. That he continually smoked bad tobacco was extremely disagreeable, all the more so as when his pipe was out he brought forth a dirtily prepared kind of tinder, which took fire quickly, but had a horrid stench, and with the first whiffs poisoned the air intolerably. I called this preparation

“ the Basedovian smell-fungus,” and wanted it to be introduced under this name into natural history. At this he was greatly amused, and to my disgust he explained in detail the hateful preparation, and took a malicious pleasure in my aversion from it. This was one of the deeply rooted disagreeable peculiarities of this man, who was so admirably endowed, that he liked to tease others and provoke in a spiteful way the most self-possessed person. He could never see anyone quiet ; with his mocking irony and harsh voice he irritated him, by some surprising question he embarrassed him, and laughed bitterly when he had gained his end, but was quite content when the object of his jests quickly collected himself and gave him something in return.

How much greater was my longing for Lavater ! He, too, seemed pleased when he saw me again, confided to me much that had happened hitherto, especially what related to the different character of his fellow-guests, among whom he had known how to make many friends and disciples. I, myself, now found many an old acquaintance, and in those whom I had not seen for several years I began to notice what in youth long remains hidden from us, that men grow old and women change. The company increased every day. We danced immoderately, and, as in the two great bath-houses, people came into pretty near contact, with good and close acquaintance many kinds of jesting were carried on. Once I disguised myself as a village clergyman, and a well-known friend as his wife ; we came before the elegant society as rather troublesome by our excessive politeness, and so every one was put into good humour. There was no lack of serenades in the evening, midnight, and morning, and we younger ones enjoyed little sleep. In contrast with these dissipations I always passed a part of the night with Basedow. He never went to bed, but dictated unceasingly. Often he threw himself on the couch and slumbered, while his Tiro,<sup>1</sup> pen in hand, remained sitting quietly, all ready to continue writing when the half-awakened author should give free course to his thoughts. All this took place in a room tightly closed, filled with smoke of tobacco and his tinder. As often as I finished a dance I ran up to Basedow, who was ready to speak and argue

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<sup>1</sup> Freedman and pupil of Cicero and amanuensis.

about any problems, and when, after some time, I hurried again to the dance, before I had shut the door behind me, quietly dictating, he took up the thread of his essay, as if there were nothing else in the world.

We then made together an excursion into the neighbourhood, visited the castles, and especially noble ladies, who were much more inclined than the men to receive intellectual and spiritual communications. At Nassau, at the house of Frau von Stein,<sup>1</sup> a highly esteemed lady who enjoyed universal respect, we found a large company. Frau von Laroche was also present, and there was no lack of young ladies and children. Here, now, Lavater was led into physiognomical temptations, which mostly consisted in seeking to mislead him into taking the accidents of cultivation for the basic form, but his eye was too sure to be deceived. I, too, again, as before, had to testify to the truth of the sorrows of Werther and the dwelling-place of Lotte, a desire which I declined to gratify, not in the most polite manner; on the other hand, I collected the children around me to tell them very wonderful stories, which were put together just from well-known subjects, in which I had the great advantage that no member of my circle of hearers could have asked me with importunity what was to be regarded as truth or fiction.

Basedow adduced the view that the only thing necessary was a better education of youth, and for this he called on the people of rank and wealth for considerable contributions. But scarcely had he by reasoning and impassioned eloquence prepared the hearts of his hearers to good will, if not converted them to him, when the evil anti-Trinitarian spirit seized hold of him, so that, without the least idea where he was, he broke out into the strangest discourses, highly religious from his own standpoint, but highly blasphemous according to the convictions of the company. Lavater by his gentle seriousness, I by diverting jests, and the ladies by agreeable walks sought a remedy for this evil, but the ill-humour could not be got rid of. A Christian conversation, which was promised by the presence of Lavater, an educational one, which was expected from Basedow, one on sentiment, for which I was thought to be prepared, all was at once

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<sup>1</sup> Mother of the famous Prussian minister.

disturbed and suspended. On the way home Lavater reproached him, but I punished him in a humorous fashion. The weather was warm, and the tobacco smoke may have made Basedow's throat still more dry; he was thirsting for a glass of beer, and when from the road he saw a tavern from afar he ordered the coachman, in a most eager manner, to stop there. But just as he was driving up to the door I called out to him in an imperious manner to "go on." Basedow, astounded, could hardly, with his husky voice, bring out the contrary command. I only urged on the coachman more vehemently, and he obeyed me. Basedow cursed me, and was ready to strike me with his fists, but I answered him with the greatest composure. "Father, be calm! You ought to give me the greatest thanks. Fortunately you did not see the sign of the tavern. It was of two interlaced triangles; usually you get mad over one triangle, and if you had seen both of these we should have had to put you in a straightjacket." This just caused him immoderate laughter; in between he scolded and cursed me, while Lavater exercised his patience on the old and the young fool.

When, now, in the middle of July, Lavater was preparing for his departure, Basedow found it advantageous to join him, and I had become so accustomed to this distinguished society that I could not bring myself to abandon it. We had a delightful journey down the Lahn, refreshing alike to heart and senses. At the sight of a remarkable ruined castle I wrote that poem, "High on the Ancient Turret Stands," in Lips' album, and as it was well received, after my evil habit, in order to destroy the impression, I wrote all kinds of doggerel rhymes and comicalities on the succeeding pages. I was glad to see the glorious Rhine again, and was pleased at the astonishment of those who had not yet enjoyed this spectacle. We now landed at Coblenz; wherever we went there was a great crowd, and each of us three, in our own way, aroused interest and curiosity. Basedow and I seemed to strive which of us could be most outrageous; Lavater conducted himself rationally and with sense, only he could not conceal his favourite opinions, and therefore, with the purest intention, he appeared very extraordinary to all men of mediocrity.

The memory of a strange dinner in Coblenz I have

preserved in doggerel verses, which may, perhaps, stand with all their kindred in my new edition. I sat between Lavater and Basedow; the former instructed a country clergyman on the mysteries of the Revelation of St John, and the latter busied himself in vain in proving to an obstinate drawing-master that baptism was an obsolete usage and not calculated for our times. And as we went farther on to Cologne I wrote in an album :—

“ And, as to Emmaus, with all their might  
Hastening you might have seen them ;  
The prophets, talking on left and right,  
While the world-child walks between them.”

Fortunately this world-child had a side, which pointed to what is heavenly, which was now to be touched in a quite special way. While in Ems I rejoiced to hear that in Cologne we should meet the brothers Jacobi who, with other eminent and observant men, went out to meet those two remarkable travellers. I, on my part, hoped to receive forgiveness for those little improprieties which had arisen from the mischief excited in us by the keen humour of Herder. Those letters and poems in which Gleim and George Jacobi publicly rejoiced in one another had given us an opportunity for all kinds of sport, without our thinking that there was just as much self-conceit in giving pain to others when they feel comfortable, as in showing an excess of kindness to oneself or one's friends. Hence a misunderstanding had arisen between the Upper and the Lower Rhine, but of so little significance that it could easily be smoothed over, and for this women are pre-eminently adapted. Sophie Laroche had already given us the best idea of these noble brothers. Mlle. Fahlmer, who came from Düsseldorf to Frankfort, and was intimate with that circle, by the great tenderness of her sentiments and the uncommon cultivation of her mind gave us evidence of the worth of the society in which she had grown up. She gradually put us to shame by her patience with our hard High German manner; she taught us forbearance by letting us feel that we were in want of it. The true-heartedness of the younger sister of the Jacobis, the great cheerfulness of the wife of Fritz Jacobi turned our minds and spirits more and more to those regions. The last-named was calculated to captivate

me completely ; with no trace of sentimentality, expressing herself brightly, a splendid woman of the Netherlands. Without any expression of sensuality, by her robust nature she reminded us of the women of Rubens. These ladies, in longer and shorter visits to Frankfort, had formed the closest intimacy with my sister, and had opened out and cheered the serious, stiff nature of Cornelia, which was, to some extent, deficient in affection. And so Düsseldorf and Pempelfort had become for our minds and feelings a part of Frankfort. Our first meeting in Cologne was therefore frank and confidential, for the good opinion of the ladies had influence in our favour at home. They did not treat me, as hitherto on the journey, merely as the misty tail of the two great comets, but they turned particularly to me, showed me much kindness, which they also seemed disposed to receive from me. I was tired of my previous follies and impertinencies, behind which I only concealed my ill-humour, that on this journey there was so little to satisfy my heart and feeling. Therefore, what was within broke out forcibly, and this may be the reason why I remember so little of individual events. That which we have thought of, the pictures we have seen, can be called up again in the understanding and imagination : but the heart is not so obliging, it will not repeat for us its beautiful feelings, and, least of all, are we able to represent to ourselves moments of enthusiasm ; they fall upon us unawares, and we yield to them unconsciously. Others who see us at such times have therefore a clearer and purer insight into us than we have ourselves.

Religious conversations I had hitherto gently declined, and I seldom answered sensible questions with discretion, because they seemed to me too limited in comparison with what I was seeking. When anyone wished to force upon me his feelings and opinions about productions, but especially when I was bothered with the demands of everyday good sense, and people held forth to me what I ought to have done and what not, then the threads of my patience were snapped, and the conversation broke off or crumbled to pieces, so that no one could leave with a particularly good opinion of me. It would have been natural to me to have shown myself gentle and friendly, but my spirit would not be schoolmastered ; rather it required to be opened out



by frank good will and sincere sympathy, so as to surrender itself entirely. But one feeling which gained the upper hand of me, and could not find an expression strange enough, was the sensation of the past and the present being one ; a way of looking at things which brought something ghost-like into the present. It is expressed in many of my larger and smaller poems, and in poetry always has a beneficial influence, though at the moment when it was immediately expressed in life it must have appeared to every one strange, inexplicable, perhaps joyless.

Cologne was the place where antiquity exercised such an incalculable effect upon me. The ruins of the Cathedral (for an unfinished work is like one destroyed) aroused the feelings to which I had been accustomed at Strasburg. I could not form any artistic opinions ; both too much and too little was given me, and there was no one who could help me out of the labyrinth of what was performed and what was intended, of the fact and the design, of what was built up and what was only indicated, as nowadays is done by our industrious and persevering friends. In society I marvelled at the galleries and columns but, when alone, I sadly sank myself into this frozen world edifice, arrested in the midst of its creation and far from completion. Here, again, was an immense thought which had not come to execution. It appears, indeed, as if architecture were only there to persuade us, that by many men, in a series of years, nothing can be accomplished, and that in arts and in deeds only that comes to fulfilment which, like Minerva, springs full-grown and armed from the head of the inventor.

In these moments, which were more oppressing than elevating, I did not suspect that the tenderest and most beautiful feeling was awaiting me close at hand. I was taken into Jacobi's house, where that which I was wont inwardly to picture to myself came actually and sensibly before me. This family may have died out long ago, but on the ground floor, which opened on a garden, we found nothing changed. A flooring symmetrically adorned with brownish red tiles, highly carved chairs with embroidered seats and backs, leaves of tables artistically inlaid, on heavy feet, metal chandeliers, an immense fire-place and fire-irons appropriate to it, everything in harmony with those early days, and in the whole room nothing new, nothing con-

nected with to-day but ourselves ; but that which more than all increased and completed the sensations of wonder which had been aroused, was a large family picture above the fire-place. The former wealthy inhabitant of this abode sat depicted there with his wife, surrounded by his children, all present, fresh, and living, as if of yesterday, or indeed of to-day, and yet all of them had passed away. Even these young, round-cheeked children had grown old, and without this artistic representation not a memory of them would have remained. When overcome by these impressions I cannot say how I acted, how I behaved. The greatest depth of my human talents and poetic capabilities was revealed in the infinite stirring of my heart ; all that was good and loving in my soul opened out and broke forth. From that moment, without further examination or debate, I became a partner for life in the affection and confidence of these excellent men.

As a result of this union of soul and intellect, in which all that was living in each came forth in speech, I offered to recite my newest and most favourite ballads. " The King of Thule " and " There was a Rascal Bold Enough " had a good effect, and I delivered them with more feeling, as my poems were still bound to my heart, and only seldom passed my lips. I was easily hindered by the presence of certain persons, to whom my own tender feeling seemed wrong ; often in the middle of my recitation I became confused and could not get right again. How often on that account have I not been accused of caprice and of a strange, whimsical nature.

Although poetic composition now principally occupied me and exactly suited my mental temperament, I was no stranger to reflection on all kinds of subjects, and Jacobi's original and natural tendency to dwell on the inscrutable was most welcome and agreeable to me. Here no controversy arose, neither a Christian one, as with Lavater, nor a didactic one, as with Basedow. The thoughts which Jacobi imparted to me arose immediately from his own feeling, and how peculiarly was I penetrated when with absolute confidence he did not conceal from me the profoundest demands of his soul. From so remarkable a union of necessity, passion, and ideas there could only arise for me presentiments of that which in the future would become

more clear. Fortunately, I had already on this side developed, if not fully formed myself, and had received into myself the existence and the manner of thinking of an extraordinary man, doubtless only incompletely and, as it were, carelessly, but I already felt from it important influences. This mind which worked so decisively upon me and had so great an influence on my whole manner of thinking was Spinoza. After I had looked about throughout the world in vain for a means of cultivating my strange nature, I came at last upon the ethics of this man. Of what I had read out of the work and what I read into it, I can give no account ; enough, I here found a sedative for my passions ; there seemed to open for me a wide and free view over the material and moral world. But what especially fastened me to him was the boundless disinterestedness which shone forth from every sentence. That marvellous expression : " He who loves God rightly must not desire God to love him in return," with all the premises on which it rests, and all the consequences which follow from it, filled my whole power of thought. To be disinterested in everything, but most of all in love and friendship, was my highest desire, my maxim, my practice, so that bold word of mine later on : " If I love thee what is that to thee ? " <sup>1</sup> was spoken right out of my heart. Further, it must not be denied that the closest unions follows from opposites. The all-composing calmness of Spinoza was in strong contrast with my all-disturbing activity, his mathematical method was the opposite of my poetic feeling and way of representing things, and even that disciplined way of treating things, which was thought not adapted for most subjects, made me his impassioned disciple, his most decided worshipper. Mind and heart, understanding and feeling, sought each other with a necessary elective affinity, and hence came the union of the most different natures. Yet all was fermenting and seething in the first action and reaction. Fritz Jacobi, the first whom I permitted to look into this chaos, and whose nature was also labouring in the lowest depths, received my confidence affectionately, responded to the same, and sought to lead me to his own ideas. He, too, felt an unspeakable spiritual want, and he did not wish to have it silenced by outward

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<sup>1</sup> Said by Philina in " Wilhelm Meister," Book IV., p. 10.

aid, but to gain development and illumination from himself. What he communicated to me of his own state of mind I could not comprehend, and all the less because I could form no conception as to my own. Still he, as he was far in advance of me in philosophic thought, even in the study of Spinoza, endeavoured to guide and illuminate my obscure striving. Such a purely intellectual relationship was new to me, and aroused in me a passionate longing for further communion. At night, after we had separated and gone to our own bedrooms, I sought him yet again. The moonlight quivered over the broad Rhine, and we, standing by the window, revelled in the fullness of mutual giving, which in that splendid time of development wells up so richly. Still of that unspeakable delight I can now give no account ; there remains more clearly in my memory an excursion to the hunting seat of Bensberg, which, lying on the right side of the Rhine, enjoyed the most splendid view. What delighted me beyond measure was the wall decorations by Weenix. All the animals, which only the chase can furnish, lay around, skilfully arranged, as if on the plinth of a large hall with pillars ; over them we saw a wide landscape. The extraordinary man had exhausted his whole talent in giving life to those lifeless creatures in the representation of the various coverings of animals, the bristles, hair, feathers, horns, and claws he equalled Nature, with regard to the effect, he had exceeded her. When we had sufficiently admired these works of art as a whole, we were compelled to reflect on the handling by which such pictures so intellectually significant and with such mechanical skill could be produced. One could not understand how they could have arisen by human hands, or by means of what instrument. The pencil was not sufficient ; one must take quite special preparations to make such varied effects possible. We came close to them ; we withdrew to a distance with equal astonishment : the cause was as remarkable as the effect.

The further journey down the Rhine was pleasant and fortunate. The broadening out of the river invites the mind to a like expression, and to look into the distance. We reached Düsseldorf, and from there to Pempelfort, a most delightful and cheerful halting-place, where a spacious house, opening on a large and well-kept garden, collected together a thoughtful and well-bred circle. The members of the

family were numerous, and there was no lack of strangers, who found much enjoyment in these rich and pleasant conditions.

In the Düsseldorf gallery my predilection for the Flemish school was able to find plentiful nourishment. There were whole rooms full of those vigorous, sturdy pictures, bright with the fullness of Nature, and if my insight was not enlarged, my knowledge was enriched and my interest in Art strengthened.

The beautiful calm ease and constancy which marked the chief character of this family union soon became animated before the eyes of the guest, who could observe that a wide sphere of influence emanated from here and reached out elsewhere. The activity and opulence of neighbouring cities and districts contributed not a little to enhance the feeling of inward contentment. We visited Elberfeld and were delighted with the activity of so many well-arranged factories. Here we found again our friend Jung, known as Stilling, who had already come to meet us at Coblenz, and who always had faith in God and truth towards men as his most precious guardians. Here we saw him in his circle, and took pleasure in the confidence which his fellow-citizens reposed in him, for, while they were occupied with earthly gain, they did not leave the heavenly treasures out of their view. The industry of the region had a tranquillising appearance, because here the useful was the product of order and neatness. In the contemplation of these things we passed happy days.

When I returned to my friend Jacobi I enjoyed the rapturous feeling of a union of the innermost soul. We were both animated by the mutual influence of the liveliest hope, and I pressingly urged upon him to represent forcibly in some definite form all that was working and moving in him. This was the means by which I had extricated myself from so many perplexities; I hoped it would suit him also. He did not delay. He undertook the thing with zeal, and how much that is good, beautiful, and consoling has he not accomplished? And so, at last, we parted with the blessed feeling of eternal union, wholly without presentiment that our efforts would take opposite directions, as in the course of life was only too manifest.

What, besides, occurred to me on the return journey

up the Rhine has quite vanished from my memory, partly because the second sight of the objects is wont in my thoughts to be mingled with the first ; partly also because, turned in upon myself, I was endeavouring to arrange my numerous experiences, and to work up what had affected me. Of one important result, which occupied me a long time and summoned me to creative effort, I will now speak.

With my unduly free disposition, with my life and action so aimless and purposeless, I could not conceal from myself that Lavater and Basedow made use of intellectual and even spiritual means for earthly ends. It soon struck me, who spent my talent and my days with no object, that both these men, each in his own way, while they were busied in teaching, instructing, and persuading, concealed certain views in the background, to the furtherance of which they attached much importance. Lavater went gently and prudently to work, Basedow vehemently, offensively, even awkwardly ; both, too, were so convinced of their favourite schemes and undertakings, and of the excellence of their way of proceeding, that one was obliged to hold them for honourable men, to love them, and esteem them. Especially could it be said in praise of Lavater that he actually had higher aims, and if he acted according to worldly wisdom, he could well believe that the end justifies the means. As I observed them both and, indeed, freely confessed to them my opinion, and received theirs in return, there arose in me the thought that indeed the eminent man must wish to spread around him that which is divine within him. But then he comes in contact with the rough world, and in order to influence it he must put himself on the same level with it ; but thus he very much gives up those high excellencies, and in the end renounces them completely. The heavenly, the eternal is sunk into a body of earthly designs, and hurried along with it to the fate of the transient. Now I regarded the career of these two men from this point of view, and they seemed to me as worthy of honour as also to be pitied, for I thought I could foresee that both would find themselves compelled to sacrifice the higher to the lower. But as I now pursued all observations of this kind to the farthest extremity, and looked beyond my own narrow experience to similar cases in history, so there developed within me the plan of representing in the life of Mahomet, whom I had never been

able to regard as an impostor, those courses which were so clearly seen by me in actual life, which lead much more to ruin than to salvation. A short time before I had read and studied with great interest the life of the oriental prophet, and so, when the thought came to me, I was fairly well prepared. The whole approached more to the regular form, to which I was again inclining, though I still used in moderation the freedom gained from the stage of arranging time and place according as I pleased. The piece began with a hymn, which Mahomet sings alone under the clear sky of night. First, he adores the innumerable stars as so many gods, then there rises the friendly star, Gad (our Jupiter), and now to him, as the king of the stars, exclusive worship is devoted. Soon the moon rises up and wins the eye and heart of the worshipper, who, splendidly refreshed and strengthened by the ascending sun, is summoned to new praise. But this change, however delightful it may be, is still disquieting; the mind feels it must yet rise above itself: it rises to God, the only One, the Eternal, the Absolute, to whom all those splendid but limited creatures owe their existence. I composed this hymn with great warmth of feeling; it is lost, but might easily be restored for the purpose of a cantata, and would recommend itself to the musician by the variety of its expression. But it would be necessary to imagine, as at that time was the intention, the leader of a caravan with his family and whole tribe, and so, for the alternation of the voices and the strength of the choruses, provision would be made.

After Mahomet had thus converted himself he communicates these feelings and thoughts to his family. His wife and Ali join him unreservedly. In the second act he himself endeavours, but Ali more vigorously, to extend this faith in the tribe. Here agreement and opposition show themselves according to the difference of character. The feud begins, the strife becomes violent, and Mahomet must fly. In the third act he overcomes his enemies, makes his religion the public one, purifies the Kaaba from idols, but as all cannot be done by force he must have recourse to cunning. The earthly element increases and extends itself, the divine retires and becomes obscured. In the fourth act Mahomet pursues his conquests, his doctrine becomes more a pretext than an end, all conceivable means must be employed, and

there is no lack of cruelties. A woman, whose husband he has had put to death, poisons him. In the fifth act he feels that he is poisoned. His great composure, the return to himself, to the loftier idea, make him worthy of admiration. He purifies his doctrine, establishes his kingdom, and dies.

This was the sketch of a work which for a long time occupied my mind, for usually I must have something put together in my mind before I moved to the execution. All that genius can effect upon men of character and intellect was to be represented, and how it wins and loses in the process. Several songs, which were to be inserted, were composed beforehand ; all that remains of them is that which stands among my poems under the title " Mahomet's Song." In the play this was to be sung by Ali in honour of his master at the highest point of his success, just before the change in affairs which results from the poison. I recollect also the designs of several passages, but the development of these here would lead us too far.



## BOOK XV

FROM such manifold distractions, which, however, generally gave occasion for serious and even religious reflections, I turned back again to my noble friend, Fräulein von Klettenberg, whose presence calmed, at least for an instant, my stormy impulses and passions which streamed forth on all sides, and to her, next to my sister, I liked best to give an account of such designs as I have spoken of. I might, indeed, have noticed that her health was gradually failing, but I concealed it from myself, and the more easily as her cheerfulness increased with her illness. She was accustomed, dressed with taste and neatness, to sit in her chair, listened with kindness to the accounts of my excursions, as well as to what I read aloud to her. Sometimes I drew something for her so as to describe more easily the places I had seen. One evening when I had just been calling to mind many scenes, as the sun was going down, she and all her surroundings seemed to be transfigured, and I could not refrain, as well as my incapacity permitted, from making into a picture her person and the objects in the room. In the hands of a skilful painter, like Kersting,<sup>1</sup> it would have been most graceful. I sent it to a fair friend at a distance, and added a song as commentary and supplement :—

“ In this magic mirror clearly,  
Lo ! a dream, how calm, how blest ;  
Where the friend whom God loves dearly,  
Suffering 'neath his wing doth rest.

Mark how her endeavours bear her  
Out of life's waves to yonder shore,  
And see, with thine own image near her,  
The God that for you sorrowed sore.

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<sup>1</sup> 1788-1847, a painter in Dresden.

Feel, too, what I, in the waving  
Of that heavenly ether, knew,  
As, with quick, impatient striving,  
My rapturous hand these outlines drew."

If in these verses, as often happened on other occasions, I expressed myself as an alien, a stranger, even a heathen ; this was not repugnant to her. On the contrary, she assured me that she liked me as well as before, when I made use of the Christian terminology, in the application of which I was never quite successful. Indeed, it was already a customary thing, when I read aloud to her missionary intelligence, which she was always fond of hearing, that I should take the part of the natives against the missionaries, and prefer their old condition to their new one. But she was ever gentle and friendly, and seemed not in the least anxious about me and my salvation.

But my gradual withdrawal from that creed of hers arose from the fact that I had endeavoured to grasp it with too great zeal, with passionate affection. Since I had drawn near to the Moravian brotherhood my inclination to this society, which had gathered itself together under the victorious banner of Christ, had always increased. Every positive religion has the greatest attraction when it is understood in the period of its formation. On that account it is so pleasing to think of oneself in times of the apostles when all is represented as still fresh and immediately spiritual ; and the Moravian community had herein something magical as they seemed to continue or rather to perpetuate those early conditions. It connected its origin with them, it had never perished, but had only wound its way through the rough world by unnoticed tendrils ; now a single germ struck root under the protection of a pious and eminent man,<sup>1</sup> in order to spread over the world from imperceptible, apparently accidental, beginnings. Herein the most important point was that the religious and civic constitution was inseparably combined, that the teacher was at the same time the ruler, and the father at the same time the judge ; farther than this, the religious head, to whom was given unlimited faith in spiritual things, was also

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<sup>1</sup> Count Zinzendorf, 1700-60, the founder of the Moravian brotherhood.

summoned to the guidance of worldly affairs, and his answer as to what should determine the administration in general, as well as each individual by the verdict of the lot, was received with submission. The beautiful tranquillity, as at least outward appearances testified, was most alluring ; while, on the other side, all the power of action in man was claimed by the missionary vocation. The excellent man, with whom I became acquainted at Marienborn, where Councillor Moritz, the agent of the Count von Isenberg, took me with him, had gained my entire respect, and it was only for them to make me their own. I occupied myself with their history, their doctrine, its origin, and development, and found that I was able to give an account of it, and to converse about it with those who sympathised with it. I could not, however, help noticing that the brethren would not allow me to pass for a Christian any more than would Fräulein von Klettenberg, which at first disturbed me, but afterwards my inclination to them became somewhat colder. For a long time I could not discover the exact ground of difference, though it was fairly obvious, till it came upon me more by accident than by any research. That which separated me from the brotherhood, as well as from other worthy Christian souls, was just that on which the Church has already more than once fallen into dissension. One part maintained that by the fall of man human nature had been so far corrupted that to its innermost core not the least trace of good was to be found in it, therefore, man must renounce his own powers altogether and expect everything from grace and its influence. The other part very willingly admitted the hereditary defects of mankind, but wished to attribute to nature a certain inward germ which, animated by divine favour, was able to grow up to a joyous tree of spiritual happiness. With this conviction I was penetrated to my inmost soul without knowing it myself, though with tongue and pen I had confessed myself to be on the other side. I had gone on in such obscurity that I had never expressed to myself the actual dilemma. From this dream, however, I was at once drawn quite unexpectedly, when I disclosed, quite frankly, in a religious conversation this opinion, to me a most innocent one, and in consequence had to endure a severe lecture. This very thing they maintained against me was genuine Pelagianism, and to the misfortune

of modern times this corrupting doctrine was again prevailing. At this I was astonished and alarmed. I went back to Church history, reflected more closely on the doctrine and fate of Pelagius,<sup>1</sup> and now saw clearly how these two irreconcilable opinions had fluctuated hither and thither, and had been accepted and acknowledged by men, according as they were of a more active or passive nature.

The course of the past years had incessantly led me to the exercise of my own power. Within me was at work a restless activity, with the best desire for a moral cultivation. The outer world demanded that this activity should be regulated and used for the help of others, and this great demand I had to work out in myself. On all sides I had been turned to Nature, and she had appeared to me in her glory ; I had made the acquaintance of so many good and true men, who in their duty and for the sake of their duty let themselves become embittered ; to renounce them, or to renounce myself, seemed impossible ; the gulf which separated me from that doctrine (of total depravity) became clear to me ; I had, therefore, to separate myself from this society, and, as my love for the Holy Scriptures as well as for their founder and the earlier confessors could not be taken from me, I formed a Christianity for my private use, and endeavoured, by diligent study of history and careful observation of those who had been inclined to my opinion, to establish and build it up.

Because everything which I received into my mind with affection took on at once a poetic form, I was now seized with the strange idea of treating epically the history of the Wandering Jew, which had long before been impressed on me by popular books, so as to bring out by means of this guide the prominent points of religious and Church history, as it should seem fit to me. But how I formed the fable, and what meaning I put into it, I will now explain.

In Jerusalem there was a shoemaker, to whom legend gives the name of Ahasuerus. For this character my Dresden shoemaker had given me the main features. I had fitted him out with the spirit and humour of a craftsman, of Hans Sachs, and ennobled him by an affection for Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> He did not believe in the doctrine of Original Sin, and was an important opponent of St Augustine.

As at the open workshop he liked to converse with the passers-by, teased them, and in Socratic fashion stimulated every one in his own way ; neighbours and others among the people enjoyed lingering at his shop, even Pharisees and Sadducees spoke to him, and the Saviour Himself, accompanied by His disciples, would often stop by him. The shoemaker, whose thoughts were directed solely upon the world, conceived a special affection for our Lord, which was expressed for the most part by a desire to convert this lofty man, whose thoughts he did not comprehend, to his own way of thinking and acting. He therefore pressed upon Him urgently to come out of His contemplation and not go about the country with such idlers, not to draw people away from their work into the desert. A people when assembled together, he said, was always excited, and no good would come of it.

On the other hand, the Lord sought to instruct him by symbols in His higher views and aims, but these would not profit the sturdy man. Therefore, as Christ became more and more important, and, indeed, a public person, the benevolent craftsman expressed himself more sharply and vehemently, representing that disturbance and tumult would necessarily ensue, and Christ Himself would be compelled to declare Himself as head of a party, which could not possibly be His intention. When now the course of things followed, as we know them, Christ was taken and condemned ; Ahasuerus was still more vehemently provoked when Judas, who had apparently betrayed the Lord, entered his workshop in despair, and with lamentations relates his unfortunate deed. He was, in fact, as well as the cleverest of the other disciples, firmly convinced that Christ would declare Himself regent and head of the nation. He had wished to compel the Lord, whose delay had hitherto been insuperable, by force to the deed, and therefore he had incited the priesthood to acts of violence which previously they had not dared to do. The disciples, on their side, were not without arms, and probably all would have turned out well, if the Lord had not given Himself up and left them in a most forlorn condition. Ahasuerus, who is not at all inclined to mildness by this narrative, embitters still more the condition of the poor ex-apostle, so that nothing remains for him but to hasten away and hang himself.

Now, when Jesus was led to death past the workshop of the shoemaker, the well-known scene there took place. The sufferer sinks under the burden of the cross, and Simon of Cyrene is compelled to carry the same. Here Ahasuerus comes forth after the manner of men with hard intellect, who, when they see anyone suffering through their own fault, feel no pity, but are rather impelled by an untimely sense of justice to make matters worse by reproaches ; he comes out and repeats all his former warnings, which he changes into violent accusations, and these his attachment to the sufferer seems to justify him in making. Christ does not answer, but at the instant the loving Veronica covers the face of the Saviour with the cloth ; as she takes it away and raises it on high, Ahasuerus sees the countenance of the Lord upon it, but in no way that of the sufferer of the moment, but transfigured and shining with heavenly life. Blinded by this appearance, he turns away his eyes, and hears the words, "Thou shalt wander over the earth until thou seest Me again in this form." After some time, the man who is overwhelmed comes back to himself, finds that every one has pressed on to the place of execution ; the streets of Jerusalem are deserted ; restlessness and longing drive him forth, and he begins his wandering.

Of this, and of the event by which the poem was ended but not finished, I will perhaps speak another time. The beginning, scattered passages, and the conclusion were written. But I did not bring them together ; I wanted the time to make the necessary studies so as to give it the content which I wished. The few pages were left lying by the more readily, as an epoch was developed in me, which necessarily arose after I had written "Werther," and saw its effects.

The common fate of man, which all of us have to bear, must fall most heavily on those whose intellectual powers develop themselves early and widely. We may rise in the world under the protection of parents and relations, we may lean upon our brothers and sisters and friends, be supported by acquaintances, made happy by those we love, but the end always is that man is thrown back upon himself. It seems as if the Divinity had placed itself in such a way towards men as not always to be able to respond to their reverence, trust, and love ; at least not in the urgent moment. Young enough, I had often learnt that in the moments of

greatest need the call came to me, "Physician, heal thyself,"<sup>1</sup> and how frequently had I been obliged to sigh out in pain "I tread the winepress alone."<sup>2</sup> While I was looking round for means of establishing my independence, I found that my creative talent was the surest basis for it. For many years this never failed me for a moment: what I was conscious of by day, often shaped itself into regular dreams by night, and when I opened my eyes there appeared to me either a wonderful new whole, or the part of something already existing. Generally, I wrote everything in the early part of the day, but also in the evening, or late at night, when wine and social intercourse had raised my animal spirits, one might demand of me what one liked; it was only a question of an occasion which had some character; I was then ready and prepared. As I reflected on this natural gift, and found that it belonged to me as my own, and that it could neither be favoured or hindered by anything foreign to me, I could easily base my whole existence in thought upon it. This conception changed itself into a distinct form; the old mythological figure of Prometheus occurred to me, who, separated from the gods, peopled a world from his own workshop. I felt quite clearly that one can only create anything of importance when one is isolated. My writings, which had received so much applause, were children of solitude, and since I had stood in a wider relation to the world, there was no lack of the power and desire for invention, but the execution was at a standstill, because neither in prose nor in verse had I a style properly my own, and with every new work, according to the subject, I had always to begin at the beginning and make experiments. As in this I had to refuse the help of men, or rather to exclude it, so, in the fashion of Prometheus, I separated myself from the gods also, and so much the more naturally, as with my character and way of thinking one sentiment always swallowed up and repelled the others.

The fable of Prometheus became alive to me. The old Titan garment I cut up according to my own shape, and, without having reflected further, began to write a piece in which is represented the difficulty which arose between

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<sup>1</sup> Luke iv. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah lxiii. 3.

Zeus and the new gods, while he forms men with his own hand, gives them life by the aid of Minerva, and founds a third dynasty. And, indeed, the reigning gods had fully cause for complaint, because they might be regarded as beings interpolated between the Titans and men. To this strange composition belongs as a monologue that poem, which has become important in German literature, because it caused Lessing to declare himself on several weighty matters of thought and feeling against Jacobi.<sup>1</sup> It acted as the match to an explosion, which revealed and brought into discussion the most private relations of worthy men; relations which they themselves were unconscious of, and which were slumbering in a society, otherwise most enlightened. The schisms were so violent that, with the addition of some accidents,<sup>2</sup> we lost one of our most valuable men, namely, Mendelssohn.

Though philosophical, even religious considerations, as often happens, may attach to this subject, still it belongs quite peculiarly to poetry. The Titans are the foil of polytheism, as one can regard the devil as the foil of Monotheism, though the latter, as well as the only god to whom he stands opposed, is not a poetic figure. The Satan of Milton, though boldly enough drawn, remains always in the disadvantageous position of the subaltern, who attempts to destroy the splendid creation of a higher being; Prometheus, on the contrary, in defiance of higher beings stands out as one who can create and form. It is also a beautiful thought, and adapted to poetry, that men should come forth not by means of the Supreme leader of the world, but by an intermediate figure, who, as a descendent of the most ancient dynasty, is of sufficient worth and importance for this purpose; so above all does the Greek mythology present an inexhaustible wealth of divine and human symbols.

Nevertheless, the spirit of the Titans and Giants storming heaven afforded no material for my poetic art. Rather did it seem fitting to me to represent that peaceful, plastic, always patient opposition, which recognises the superior power, but wishes to take an equal position. Also the

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<sup>1</sup> Lessing declared himself a follower of Spinoza.

<sup>2</sup> This refers to the fact that Mendelssohn, in taking his pamphlet to the printer, caught a chill, as a result of which he died.



bolder persons of that breed, Tantalus, Ixion, Sisyphus, were my saints. Received into the society of the gods, they would not behave themselves submissively enough; like supercilious guests they deserved the wrath of their patronising host, and draw down upon themselves a melancholy banishment. I pitied them; their condition had already by the ancients been recognised as truly tragic, and as I exhibited them in the background of my "Iphigenia" as members of a vast opposition, I am indebted to them for part of the effect which this piece had the good fortune to produce.

But at that time poetic composition and designing went on continually with me. I drew portraits of my friends, in profile, on grey paper, with white and black chalk. When I dictated, or had reading aloud, I sketched the positions of the writers and readers with their surroundings; one could not fail to recognise the likeness, and the drawings were well received. Amateurs always have this advantage, because they give their work for nothing. Feeling, however, the inadequacy of this copying, I once more had recourse to language and rhythm, which stood more at my disposal. With what gaiety, joy, and speed I went to work many of my poems bear witness, which, announcing enthusiastically the art of Nature and the nature of Art,<sup>1</sup> at the moment of their production, promoted fresh spirit in me and my friends.

When once at this epoch, and busied in this way, I sat in my room in the twilight, to which at least the appearance of an artist's studio was lent, the walls stuck over and covered with half-finished works gave the false impression of a great activity—a well-formed slender man came in whom I, at first in the twilight, took for Fritz Jacobi, but soon discovering my mistake, greeted him as a stranger. By his free decorous bearing a military air was not to be denied. He gave me his name, Von Knebel,<sup>2</sup> and from a few introductory words I perceived that he was in the Prussian service, and that by long residence at Berlin and Potsdam he had formed an excellent and active connection with the literary men there, and with German literature in general. He had particularly attached himself to Ramler,

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<sup>1</sup> "The Artist's Evening Song."

<sup>2</sup> 1744-1834. Goethe's oldest friend at the Court of Weimar.

and adopted his way of reciting poems. He was also acquainted with everything that Götz<sup>1</sup> had written, who, at that time, had no reputation among the Germans. Through his efforts the "Mädcheninsel" of this poet had been printed in Potsdam, and had come into the hands of the king, who was said to have expressed himself favourably upon it.

We had scarcely talked over these subjects of general interest in German literature when I learnt, to my delight that he was at present stationed in Weimar, and had indeed been appointed as the companion of Prince Constantin. Of the conditions there I had already heard much that was favourable; for many friends came to us from there, and they testified to the fact that the Duchess Amalia had summoned the best men for the education of her princes, that the University of Jena, through its eminent teachers, contributed its part to this excellent object, that the arts were not only protected by the above-named princes, but that she herself pursued them with profound knowledge and zeal. We also heard that Wieland stood in especial favour, that the "Deutsche Merkur," which collected the works of so many scholars from outside, contributed not a little to the fame of the city in which it was published. One of the best German theatres was there established, and it was famous for the actors, as well as the authors, who worked for it. These splendid institutions and conditions appeared to be disturbed and threatened with a prolonged stagnation, owing to the terrible conflagration of the castle, which took place in May of that year. But the confidence in the hereditary prince was so great that every one was persuaded that this injury would not only soon be repaired, but that in spite of it every other hope would be richly fulfilled. As I inquired after these persons and things, as if I were an old acquaintance, and expressed the wish to be more closely acquainted with them, the stranger replied in a very friendly manner, nothing was easier than this, as the hereditary prince, with his brother Prince Constantin, had just arrived in Frankfort, and wished to make my acquaintance. I at once showed the greatest willingness to wait upon them, and my new friend said that I must not delay, because their

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<sup>1</sup> 1721-81.

stay would not last long. In order to make ready for this I brought my visitor to my parents, who were much surprised at his arrival and his message, and had great pleasure in conversing with him. I at once hastened with him to the young princes, who received me in a most frank and friendly manner ; also Count Götz, the tutor of the hereditary prince, appeared to see me not without pleasure. Though there was no lack of literary conversation, it was an accident which caused the best introduction to it, and rendered it more significant and fruitful. Möser's patriotic "Fantasies," in fact the first part of them, were lying on the table, newly bound, and uncut. As I knew them very well, the others but little, I had the advantage of being able to give a complete account of them, and here was a most fitting opportunity for a conversation with a young prince, who had the best will and a firm determination to do the greatest good in his station in life. Möser's statement as regards its contents and feeling must be highly interesting to every German. If division, anarchy, and impotence are made a reproach to the German Empire, yet from Möser's point of view the number of small states appeared highly desirable for the diffusion of particular culture according to the necessities which arise from the situation and constitution of the most different provinces. If Möser, starting from the city, from the foundation of Osnabrück, extending himself over the Westphalian circle, managed to set forth its relation to the whole Empire, and in the examination of the subject united the past with the present, deducing the latter from the former, and clearly analysing whether an alteration was worthy of praise or blame, so every ruler in his position should proceed in like manner, so as best to become acquainted with the constitution of his territory, and its relationship with its neighbours, and with the whole, as well as to judge both the present and the future.

On this occasion many things came up relating to the difference between the states of Upper and Lower Saxony, and how their natural productions, manners, laws, and customs had been formed differently from the earliest times, and, according to their manner of government and religion, had turned things now in this way, now in that. We endeavoured to set out more exactly the difference between the two regions, and it at once appeared what an advantage

it was to have a good model before one, which, regarded not in its particularities, but in the method on which it is based, can be applied to the most different cases, and even so can be highly useful to our judgment.

At table this conversation was continued, and created a better impression for me than perhaps I deserved. For instead of making those works, which I myself could supply, the subject of conversation, instead of demanding an undivided attention for the drama and romance, I appeared, in Möser, rather to prefer such writers, where talent proceeded from active life and was thus immediately turned to what is useful, while works properly poetic, which soar above the customary things of sense, could only be profitable indirectly and accidentally. These conversations turned out like the stories of the "Thousand and One Nights," one important matter was pushed up over another, many a theme was touched upon without our being able to follow it out, and so, as the stay of the young princes in Frankfort could only be short, they got from me the promise, which I most willingly gave, that I would follow them to Mainz, and there I was to spend some days. With this agreeable news I hastened home to communicate it to my parents.

My father, however, was not at all pleased about this. For with his sentiments of being a citizen of the Empire he had always kept himself aloof from the great, and though he was in connection with the business agents of the neighbouring princes and lords, he stood in no personal relation with them. Indeed courts were among the subjects about which he was accustomed to jest, though he quite liked it if any one opposed him, only, according to his notion, it must be done intellectually and wittily. If we allowed his "Procul a Jove, procul a fulmine"<sup>1</sup> to pass, but observed that with lightning it was not so much a question of whence as of whither, he would bring up the old proverb, "With great lords it is not good to eat cherries on the road." We replied that it was still worse to eat with dainty people out of one basket. He would not deny that, but was sure, quickly, to have another proverb at hand which would put us in confusion. For as proverbs and apophthegms in

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<sup>1</sup> "Far from Jove, far from his thunder."

rhyme have their origin from the people who, since they are obliged to obey, like at least to speak, the superiors, on the other hand, manage to indemnify themselves by action. As the poetry of the sixteenth century was almost entirely forcible and didactic, there is no lack in our speech of serious and jesting sayings practised from below upwards. We younger ones now practised from above downwards, and since we took up the side of the great, we fancied ourselves to be something great. Of these sayings and counter sayings I will insert a few :—

A.

Long at Court is long in hell.

B.

There many a good fellow warms himself well.

A.

Such as I am, I am my own ;  
Never to me shall a favour be shown.

B.

Why should you blush aught to receive ?  
You must take favours if you will give.

A.

Trouble, all at the Court must catch ;  
Where it itches you must not scratch.

B.

When orators unto the people appeal,  
Where they scratch no itching they feel.

A.

The very best half of life they lose,  
Who servitude for the portion choose ;  
And happen what will, let them also know  
That the other half, too, to the devil will go.

B.

To him that with princes can make his home,  
Fortune to-day as to-morrow will come ;  
Who tries to the people to make himself dear,  
Has scattered a curse on the whole of the year.

A.

When at court the wheat ear blooms fair and tall,  
Just think that nothing will come of it all ;  
And when you fancy the granary's stored,  
Why, then, you haven't much of a hoard.

B.

If the wheat bloom, it will ripen also,  
That is the old fashion, as who doesn't know ?  
And if hail beats the harvest down to the plain,  
The very next year it will flourish again.

A.

Who will belong to himself alone,  
Let him shut himself up in a cot of his own,  
Company find in his children and wife,  
Drink nothing but light new wine,  
And never immoderately dine,  
And nothing will hinder the course of his life.

B.

Do you want from the Ruler to get away ?  
And where do you think of going to, pray ?  
Oh, don't be so sure how the matter will stand !  
Your wife has you safely under her hand,  
And she her stupid brat must obey,  
So in your own house you're a slave every day.

As I was just looking up the foregoing rhymes from old memorandum books, there fell into my hands several such joking exercises, in which we had amplified old German pithy sayings, and had contrasted them with other proverbs, the truth of which experience confirms. A selection from these may hereafter, as epilogue to the puppet show, give occasion for cheerful reflection.

By all these answers, however, my father was not turned away from his opinions. He was wont to save his strongest argument for the conclusion of the conversation, when he described in detail Voltaire's adventure with Frederick II. ; how the excessive favour, the familiarity, the mutual kindnesses were all at once suspended and disappeared. And we experienced the spectacle of that extraordinary poet and writer being arrested by Frankfort garrison soldiers on

the requisition of the Resident Freitag and the command of the Burgomaster Fichard, and kept some time a prisoner in the tavern of the Rose on the Zeil. To this we could have made many objections, among other things that Voltaire himself was not free from blame, but, out of filial respect, we always yielded the point.

When, now, on this occasion, allusion was made to such things and others like them, I scarcely knew how to demean myself, for he warned me explicitly, and maintained that the invitation was only given to entice me into a trap, and to take vengeance on me for the sauciness I had shown towards the favoured Wieland. Much as I was convinced of the opposite, while I saw only too clearly that a preconceived opinion, excited by hypochondriacal fancies, disturbed the worthy man, I did not wish directly to act against his conviction, and could find no pretext by which I might retract my promise without appearing ungrateful and impolite. Unfortunately, our friend, Fräulein von Klettenberg, to whom we were wont to resort in similar cases, was confined to her bed. In her and my mother I had two excellent companions; I always called them "Word and Deed"; for when the former cast her cheerful or rather blissful glance over earthly things, that became unravelled before her, which had perplexed the rest of us children of the world, she could usually point out the right way, because she looked upon the labyrinth from above, and was not herself caught in it. But when one had decided, we could rely upon the readiness and activity of my mother. While the former had sight to help her, the latter had faith, and as in all cases she maintained her cheerfulness, she never lacked the means of carrying out what was proposed or desired. She was now sent to our sick friend to obtain her opinion, and when this was given in favour of me, we sought to gain the consent of my father, who yielded, though sceptical and unwilling.

I arrived then, in a very cold season of the year, in Mainz, at the appointed hour, and was received by the young princes and their attendants, according to the invitation, in a very friendly way. We recalled our conversations in Frankfort, and continued them where we had left off, and as the talk turned upon the most modern German literature and its audacities, it was quite natural that that

famous piece "Gods, Heroes, and Wieland" should come up, at which I noticed with pleasure that the thing was regarded with serenity and amusement. As I was called upon to narrate how this *jeu d'esprit*, which caused so great a sensation, had actually come about, I could not help confessing, before all things, that, as true comrades of the Upper Rhine, we knew no limits to our liking or disliking. With us, reverence for Shakespeare went so far as adoration. Wieland, on the other hand, had, with his decided peculiarity of destroying the interest and spoiling the enthusiasm of himself and his readers, blamed a good deal this great author in his notes to his translation, and, indeed, in such a way as to vex us extremely, and lessen in our eyes the merit of this work. We beheld Wieland, whom we revered so highly as a poet, and who, as a translator, had rendered great service, now as a critic to be capricious, one-sided, and unjust. In addition to this he declared himself against our idols, the Greeks, and thereby sharpened our ill-will against him still more. It is sufficiently well known that the Greek gods and heroes do not repose on moral, but on glorified physical qualities, for which reason they offer such splendid forms to the artist. Now Wieland in his "Alceste" formed heroes and demi-gods in the modern style, against which nothing could be said, as every one is at liberty to transform poetic traditions according to his own aims and way of thinking. But in the letters which he inserted in the "Merkur" about this opera, he seemed to us to put forward this mode of treatment too much as a partisan, and to sin inexcusably against the excellent ancients and their lofty style, as he would not recognise the strong, healthy nature which lay at the base of their productions. We had hardly talked over, with passion, these grievances in our little society, when the customary rage for dramatising everything came upon me one Sunday afternoon, and with a good bottle of Burgundy, I wrote down the whole piece just as it stands, at one sitting. It was no sooner read to my companions, who were present, and received with the greatest jubilation, than I sent the manuscript to Lenz at Strasburg, who also appeared enraptured with it, and asserted that it must be printed on the spot. After some writing backwards and forwards, I agreed, and he speedily put it in the press at Strasburg. It was not till a long time afterwards that I



learned this was one of the first steps by which Lenz intended to injure me and bring me into a bad reputation with the public, but at that time I neither knew nor surmised anything of it. And so I related to my new patrons with complete *naïveté* this harmless origin of the piece as well as I knew it myself. And in order to persuade them fully that there was no personality in it nor any other purpose, I also communicated to them the amusing and headlong way in which we used to rally and ridicule each other among ourselves. With this I saw their spirits were quite pleased, and they almost wondered that we had so great a fear lest one of us might sleep upon his laurels. They compared such a society to those free-booters, who in every moment of repose, are afraid of becoming effeminate, and so the leader, when there are no enemies at hand, and nothing to rob, lets off a pistol under the mess table, so that even in peace there may be no lack of wounds and pains. After much talk on the subject pro and con, I was at length induced to write a friendly letter to Wieland, which I was very glad to take the opportunity of doing, since he had expressed himself in the "Merkur" in the most liberal manner about this youthful folly, and, as he had mostly done in literary feuds, ended the matter in a witty manner.

The last few days of my stay at Mainz passed very pleasantly. When my new patrons were kept away from the house on visits and banquets, I remained with their attendants, drew many a portrait, went out skating, for which the frozen ditches of the fortifications afforded the best opportunity. I returned back home full of the kindness I had met there, and was on the point, on entering into the house, of unburdening my heart by a detailed account of it ; but I saw only troubled faces, and it did not long remain concealed from me that Fräulein von Klettenberg had passed away.<sup>1</sup> I was greatly taken aback by this, because in my present situation I needed her more than ever. To console me they told me that a pious death had been added to her blissful life, and that the cheerfulness of her faith had been maintained undisturbed till the end. Yet another obstacle presented itself against my freely imparting the whole ; my father, instead of being pleased with the fortunate

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<sup>1</sup> She died, December 1774.

issue of this little adventure, persisted in his opinion, and maintained that on the other side it was only dissimulation, and perhaps they intended in the end to carry out something worse against me. I was therefore driven to my younger friends with my narrative, and to them I could not deliver the matter in sufficient detail. But here, too, from affection and goodwill came a most unpleasant result for me ; for shortly afterwards there appeared a pamphlet entitled "Prometheus and his Reviewers," also in dramatic form. In it the comical idea was carried out of putting little wood-cut figures into the dialogue instead of proper names, and by all sorts of satirical images representing those critics who had publicly expressed themselves about my works and works akin to them. Here the Altona post-rider, without his head, was blowing his horn, here a bear was growling, there a goose cackled ; the "Merkur," too, was not forgotten, and many wild and tame creatures endeavoured to confuse the artist at his work. But he, without taking particular notice of them, zealously continued his work, and did not refrain from saying what he thought about the matter in general. The appearance unexpectedly of this jest surprised me very much, because, by its style and tone, it must be by some one from our society, indeed, one must have thought the little work was my production. But the most disagreeable thing was that "Prometheus" brought out some things which had reference to my stay at Mainz and the conversations there, which none but myself could know. But it proved to me that the author was one of those who formed my most intimate circle of friends, who had heard me fully relate those events and circumstances. We looked at each other, and one suspected the other ; the unknown writer knew well how to conceal himself. I scolded him most vehemently, because it was most vexatious for me, after so favourable a reception and so important a conversation, and after the confidential letter which I had written to Wieland, to see here, again, cause for new mistrust and fresh unpleasantnesses. The uncertainty about this, however, did not last long, for as I walked up and down my rooms, reading the book aloud, I heard clearly in the fancies and turns of expression the voice of Wagner—and it was he. When I sprang downstairs to my mother, to impart to her my discovery, she confessed that she knew it already. The

author, troubled at the ill-results of what had seemed to him a good and praiseworthy plan, had revealed himself to her and asked for her intercession, so that I might not fulfil the threat I had uttered of not having any more intercourse with the writer on account of abused confidence. There also came to his aid the fact that I had myself found him out, and was disposed to be reconciled by the pleasure which accompanies a discovery of one's own. The fault, which had given occasion to such a proof of my sagacity, was forgiven. Meanwhile the public was not so easily persuaded that Wagner was the author, and that I had had no hand in the game. It was not thought that he possessed this versatility. No one reflected that he could grasp and set out well, in his own way, all that in an intellectual society had been done in jest for some time without, therefore, possessing a distinguished talent. And so I had to pay the penalty not only for my own follies but also for the frivolity and precipitancy of my friends, both this time and afterwards.

Reminded by many coincident circumstances, I will make mention of several distinguished men, who at different times on passing through Frankfort, either lodged in our house or received our friendly hospitality. Klopstock here justly stands once more at the head. I had already exchanged several letters with him, when he announced to me that he was invited to go to Carlsbad and to stay there, that he would be in Friedberg at an appointed time, and wished that I would fetch him away from there. I did not fail to be there at the right time, but he had been accidentally detained on the way, and after I had waited in vain for some days, I returned home, where some time after he arrived, excused his delay, and was very well pleased with my readiness to come and meet him. He was small of stature, but well built, his demeanour serious and formal, without being stiff, his conversation was precise and agreeable. On the whole, his presence had something of the diplomat in it. Such a man undertakes the difficult task of supporting his own dignity and that of a superior, to whom he has to give an account, of advancing his own interest as well as the much more important one of a prince, indeed of whole states, and in this critical position of making himself beyond all things pleasing to other men. And so Klopstock appeared to bear himself as a man of worth and as the representative

of higher things—of religion, morality, and freedom. He had also assumed another peculiarity of men of the world, namely, that of not speaking readily on subjects upon which he was specially expected and desired to speak. We seldom heard him speak about poetical and literary matters; but when he found me and my friends were passionate skaters, he discoursed copiously about the noble art, on which he had deeply reflected both what was to be sought and what avoided. Before, however, we could share his willing instruction, we had to allow ourselves to be set right about the expression itself, on which we were wrong. We spoke in good High German of “sledge shoes” (*schlittschuhen*), which he would not allow to pass at all, as the word does not come from “sledge” (*schlitten*), as if one went on little runners, but from “striding” (*schreiten*), because, like the Homeric gods, one strides away on these winged shoes over the sea frozen into a plain. Next we came to the instrument itself. He would have nothing to do with the concave skates, but recommended the low, broad, smooth-bottomed Friesland steel skates, as the most serviceable for speed. He was no friend of the artistic feats which are made in this exercise. According to his precept I procured such a pair of flat shoes with long toes, and have used them for many years, though with some discomfort. He understood, too, the art of horsemanship and breaking-in horses, and liked to talk about it. And so, as it appeared designedly, he usually turned the conversation away from his own profession, so as to speak more freely about unfamiliar arts, which he only pursued as a hobby. I might mention much more about these and other peculiarities of this extraordinary man, if people who had lived with him longer had not already informed us sufficiently about them. But I cannot refrain from one observation, namely, that men to whom Nature has given exceptional advantages, when placed in a narrow sphere of activity or in one not suited to them, generally fall into eccentricities, and as they do not know how to make any direct use of their gifts, try to make them of value in extraordinary and whimsical ways.

Zimmermann<sup>1</sup> was also for a time our guest. He was

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<sup>1</sup> 1728-95. A well-known physician, author of the famous treatise on “Solitude.”

tall and strongly built ; by nature he was vehement and impulsive, but had his exterior and behaviour well under control, so that in society he appeared a skilful physician and man of the world. Only in his writings and most confidential intercourse did he give unrestrained course to his inwardly untamed character. His conversation was varied and highly instructive, and if one could overlook his active sense of his own personality and merits, one could not find more agreeable intercourse. Since that which is called vanity never annoyed me, and I, on the other hand, also permitted myself to be vain, that means I did not hesitate to bring out that which in myself gave me pleasure, I got on with him perfectly well. We mutually tolerated and scolded each other, and as he showed himself frank and communicative, I learned a great deal from him in a short time.

If I judge such a man gratefully, kindly, and fundamentally, I cannot say that he was vain. We Germans misuse the word vain altogether too often, for it really conveys the idea of emptiness, and we properly designate by it only one who cannot conceal his pleasure at his nothingness and his contentment with a vacuous existence. With Zimmermann it was exactly the opposite ; he had great merits, but no inward contentment ; but he who cannot enjoy his own natural gifts in silence and find his reward in their exercise, but waits and hopes that others will recognise what he has accomplished and appreciate it worthily, finds himself in an unfortunate condition, because it is only too well known that men are very sparing of their applause, that they diminish praise, and where it can in any degree be done, turn it into blame. Whoever comes before the public without being prepared for this can expect nothing but vexation ; for, if he does not overestimate what issues from him, he yet values it without limits, and every reception of it which we experience in the world is very definitely limited, and there must be a certain susceptibility for praise and applause, as for every other pleasure. If this be applied to Zimmermann, one must here confess that no one can obtain what he does not bring with him.

Should this excuse not be allowed to pass, still less shall we be able to justify another fault of this remarkable man, because it disturbed and even destroyed the happiness of

others. This was his behaviour to his children. A daughter, who travelled with him, stayed with us while he was looking about in the neighbourhood. She might be some sixteen years old. Slender and well built, she appeared without elegance ; her regular features would have been agreeable if a trace of sympathy had disclosed itself in them, but she looked always as quiet as a picture, she seldom spoke, and never in the presence of her father. But she had scarcely been a few days alone with my mother and received into herself the cheerful, loving presence of this sympathising woman, than she threw herself at her feet with opened heart, and with a thousand tears besought my mother to keep her there. With the most passionate expression she declared that she would remain in the house as a servant, as a slave, if only she might not go back to her father, of whose severity and tyranny no one could form any conception. Her brother had gone mad at his treatment, she had borne it with difficulty so long, because she had believed that it was no different in any family, or not much better, but now that she experienced such loving, cheerful, and unconstrained treatment, her situation had become to her a veritable hell. My mother was very much moved when she informed me of her passionate outburst, indeed, she went so far in her pity that she gave me to understand, not obscurely, that she would be well content to keep the child in the house if I could make up my mind to marry her. If she were an orphan, I replied, I might think about it and undertake it, but Heaven defend me from a father-in-law who is such a father. My mother took much trouble with the good child, but she became only the more unhappy. At last one found an escape by sending her to a *pension*. Her life, moreover, was not a very long one.

I would hardly mention this blameworthy characteristic of so meritorious a man if it had not already become a matter of public conversation, especially when, after his death, one thought of the wretched hypochondria with which, in his last hours he tormented himself and others. For that severity, too, towards his children was hypochondria, a partial insanity, a continuous moral homicide which, after he had sacrificed his children, he at last turned against himself. But we should remember that this man, who appeared robust, was a sufferer in his best years, that an

incurable disease tormented the skilful physician who had helped, and still did help, so many sick people. Yes, this excellent man with outward respect, fame, honour, rank, and wealth, had the saddest life. Whoever wishes to learn more about it from existing publications will not condemn but pity him.

But if it is now expected that I should give a more precise account of the effect of this remarkable man upon me, I must make mention of that epoch in a general way. The period in which we lived might be called the period of demands, for every one required of himself and others that which no man had yet accomplished. A light had arisen on superior spirits, who could think and feel, in which they saw that the immediate original understanding of Nature and an activity based upon it was the best thing a man could desire, and a thing not difficult to attain. Experience therefore became again the universal watchword, and every one opened his eyes as well as he could. Actually it was the physicians who had most cause to work to this end, and opportunity to look about them. There shone upon them a star from out of antiquity, which could serve as an example of all that was desired. The writings which had come down to us under the name of Hippocrates furnished a model of how a man should look at the world and should hand on what he had seen, without mingling himself with it. But no one reflected that we could not see like the Greeks, and that we shall never become such poets, sculptors, and physicians as they. Granted that we could learn from them, we had meanwhile experienced an infinite deal, and not always of the clearest kind, and very often our experiences had been formed on our preconceived opinion. But all this was to be known, discriminated, and sifted; this was again an immense demand, for one was by personal observation and action to become acquainted with healthy nature, as if she were for the first time noticed and dealt with; only so was what was genuine and right to be done. But as learning, in general, cannot be thought of without a universal smattering and pedantry, or the practice (of a profession) not easily without empiricism and charlatanism, there sprang up a violent conflict, because one wanted to separate use from abuse, and to gain for the kernel the upper hand over the shell. In order to come to the carrying out of the

matter, one saw that the shortest way of getting through with the thing was to call in the aid of genius, which, by magic gifts, could settle the strife and accomplish what was required. Meanwhile, the understanding meddled in the affair, everything was to be brought to a clear conception and set out in logical form so that every prejudice should be put aside and all superstition destroyed. Now because some extraordinary men, like Borehaave<sup>1</sup> and Haller, had accomplished what was incredible, people seemed justified in demanding still more from their pupils and successors. It was maintained that the path was opened, though in all earthly things a path can seldom be spoken of, for as the water which is displaced by the ship quickly bursts in again behind it, so error, when superior spirits have pushed it aside and made a place for themselves, very quickly, according to its nature, closes up again behind them.

But of this the excellent Zimmermann could form no idea ; he would not confess that the world is filled up with absurdity. With impatience amounting to mania he rushed upon everything which he recognised and held to be wrong. It was all the same to him whether he was fighting with a nurse or Paracelsus, with a charlatan or a chemist, his blows fell alike in either case. When he was out of breath he was greatly astonished at seeing all the heads of the Hydra, which he had thought to tread upon with his feet, all fresh again, showing him their teeth from innumerable jaws.

Whoever reads his writings, and especially his excellent work on "Experience," will perceive more definitely what was discussed between this admirable man and myself. His influence was the more powerful upon me, as he was twenty years my senior. As a famous physician he was specially employed among the upper classes, and here every moment the subject of his conversation was the corruption of the times, caused by effeminacy and luxury ; and so his medical discourses, like those of the philosophers and my poetic friends, impelled me back again to Nature. I could not fully sympathise with his passionate rage for improvement. After we had separated I rather soon withdrew back into my own peculiar department, and

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<sup>1</sup> 1668-1738 of Leyden, one of the most famous physicians of the eighteenth century.



endeavoured to apply the gifts bestowed on me by Nature with moderate exertion and in a cheerful opposition to that which I disapproved of, to procure scope for myself, unconcerned as to how far my efforts might reach and whither they might lead me.

Von Salis, who was establishing a large *pension* at Marschlins, visited us at that time. He was a serious and intelligent man, who must have made in silence strange observations about the Bohemian superiority of the life of our little society. Sulzer may have experienced the same thing; he came in contact with us on his journey to the South of France, at least a passage in the description of his travels, in which he makes mention of me, seems to point to it.

These visits, pleasant as well as profitable, were mixed with others, which we would rather have refused. Really needy and shameless adventurers turned to the confiding youth, supporting their urgent demands by real as well as by fictitious relationships or misfortunes. They borrowed money from me, and put me in a position in which I in turn had to borrow, so that I fell into the most unpleasant relations with wealthy and well-meaning friends. If I wished all such suppliants to the devil, my father felt himself in the position of the magician's apprentice who is glad to see his house washed clean, but is frightened when the flood comes rushing in unceasingly over threshold and stairs. For it was by the too great kindness of my father that the moderate plan of life which he had designed for me was deranged step by step, put off, and from one day to another changed contrary to expectation. My stay at Regensburg and Vienna was as good as given up, but yet on my way to Italy I was to go through them, so as at least to gain a general idea of them. On the other hand, some of my friends who could not approve of so long a circuit in order to get into active life, were of opinion that I should use the moment, when so much favour was opening out, and consider a permanent establishment in my native city. For though the Council was closed to me, first by my grandfather and then by my uncle, there were yet many civil offices to which I might make claim, remain for a time, and await the future. There were many agencies which gave enough to do, and the posts as Resident were honourable. I let myself be persuaded, and thought I could fit myself

into it without having tested whether such a mode of life and business would suit me, which demands that, even in one's free time one should principally have an end in view, and now to these projects and designs there was added a tender inclination, which seemed to draw me towards a more domestic life, and to hasten that decision.

The society of young men and women which I have mentioned before as indebted to my sister, if not for its origin yet for its holding together, still remained after her marriage and departure, because they had grown accustomed to each other, and could not spend one evening a week better than in this friendly circle. That strange orator, whose acquaintance we made in the sixth book, had also returned to us after many adventures, more clever and more eccentric, and once again played the legislator of our little state. As a sequel to our earlier jokes he had excogitated something similar; every week lots were to be drawn, not as before to decide on pairs of lovers, but as to real married couples. How lovers should behave to one another was well enough known by us, but the proper demeanour of husband and wife in society we were quite ignorant of, and now with our increasing years we ought to learn this before all things. He issued rules in general which obviously consisted in this: that we must act as though we did not belong to one another, we were not to sit near one another nor talk much together, still less indulge in caresses. At the same time we were to avoid everything which might occasion mutual suspicion and unpleasantness; on the other hand, he would gain the greatest praise who knew in an unrestrained way how to confer obligations on his wife.

The lots were then drawn for decision. Over some odd matches, as it chanced, we laughed and joked, and the universal marriage comedy was begun in good humour, and renewed every week.

Oddly enough it happened that the lot from the beginning destined the same lady<sup>1</sup> to me twice. She was a very good creature, just such a person as one would wish to think of as his wife. Her figure was beautiful and regular, her face pleasing, and in her demeanour there prevailed a repose

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<sup>1</sup> Anna Sibylla Munch, at that time sixteen years old.

which testified to the health of her mind and body. Every day and hour she was quite herself. Her domestic activity was in high repute. Without being talkative one could recognise in her expressions a just understanding and a natural culture. It was easy to meet such a person with friendliness and esteem. I was already accustomed to do it from a general feeling, and a sort of traditional kindness acted upon me as a social duty. But when the lot brought us together for the third time, our teasing lawgiver most solemnly declared Heaven had spoken, and we could not now be separated. We both accepted it, and mutually adapted ourselves so well to our public conjugal duties, that we might really have served for a model. As now, according to the general regulations, all the pairs united for the evening were obliged to address one another for the few hours with "Du," and so in the course of a few weeks we were so accustomed to this confidential address, that also in the interval whenever we met the "Du" came simply out. But habit is a strange thing ; by degrees we both of us found nothing more natural than this relation. I liked her more and more, and her manner with me testified to a beautiful calm confidence, so that at times, if a priest had been present, we might have been united on the spot without much hesitation. As at each of our social gatherings something new had to be read aloud, one evening I brought with me as a perfectly fresh novelty, "The Memoir of Beaumarchais against Clavigo" in the original. It gained great applause. The remarks to which it gave rise did not fail to appear, and after much had been said on both sides, my dear partner said to me : "If I were thy mistress, and not thy wife, I would implore thee to transform the memoir into a play ; it seems to me quite suited for that." "That thou mayest see, my love," I replied, "that mistress and wife can even be united in one person, I promise that in a week's time the subject-matter of this manuscript shall be read aloud as a piece for the theatre, as has just been done with these pages." They were astonished at so bold a promise, and I did not delay in fulfilling it. What in such cases is called invention was with me instantaneous. As I was escorting home my titular wife I was silent. She asked me what was the matter ? "I am already thinking out the play," I replied, "and am in the midst of it. I wish to show thee that I gladly do

something to please thee." She pressed my hand, and as I in turn hastily kissed it, she said : " Thou must not fall out of thy character. People think that to show tenderness is not suitable for married people." " Let them think it," I rejoined, " we will keep to our own way."

Before I got home, though indeed by a very circuitous route, the piece was already pretty well thought out. That this should not seem boastful, I will confess that already on the first and second reading, the subject had come before me in a dramatic and even theatrical form ; but, without such an incitement, the piece, like so many others, would have remained among the possible creations. My method of proceeding here is well enough known. Weary of villains, who from revenge, hate, or mean purposes oppose a noble nature and ruin it, I wished in *Carlos* to show the working of pure good sense with true friendship against passion, inclination, and outward distress, so as for once to produce a tragedy in this way. Justified by our patriarch Shakespeare, I did not hesitate for a moment to translate word for word the chief scenes, and what was properly dramatic in the representation. Finally, in order to conclude it, I borrowed the end of an English ballad, and so I was ready even before Friday came. The good effect which I attained in the reading will be easily understood. My liege spouse was not a little pleased with it, and it seemed as if our relation had become more intimate and firm by this production, as if by an intellectual offspring.

But Mephistopheles Merck did me here, for the first time, a great injury. For when I communicated the piece to him he answered : " You must not in future write any more such rubbish, others can do that, too." Yet in this he was wrong. We should not in all things go beyond the ideas which men have already formed ; it is also good that much should cleave to the customary way of thinking. Had I at that time written a dozen such pieces, which, with a little encouragement, would have been easy enough for me, three or four of them perhaps would have kept on the stage. Every management which knows how to prize its repertory can say what an advantage that would be.

By these and other intellectual diversions our strange marriage game became a family story, if not the talk of the town, which did not sound unpleasantly in the ears of the

mothers of our fair ones. My mother, too, was not at all opposed to such an event ; she had always been favourably disposed to the lady with whom I had come into so strange a relationship, and was confident that she would make as good a daughter-in-law as a wife. The indefinite bustle in which for some time I had moved about did not please her, and, indeed, she had the greatest trouble from it. It was she who had to make abundant entertainment for the stream of guests, without seeing herself compensated for quartering these literary people except by the honour they did her son by feasting on him. It was further clear to her that so many young people—all of them without property—did not assemble themselves together only for scientific and poetic purposes but also for a gay life, would come to loss and injury among themselves, and most certainly of all, myself, whose thoughtless generosity and fondness for becoming security for others she well knew.

She therefore considered the long-planned Italian journey which my father had again brought forward was the surest means of cutting through all these relations at once. But in order that no new danger should spring up in the wide world, she thought first to make fast the union which had already been introduced, so as to render my return to my native land more desirable, and a final determination more decided. Whether I only attribute this plan to her, or whether she had already designed it, perhaps, with her departed friend, I cannot decide, suffice it to say that her actions were based on a considered plan. For I often had to hear that since Cornelia's marriage our family circle had become altogether too narrow ; one found that from me a sister, from my mother a helper, from my father a pupil had departed. And these sayings were not all. It happened, as by chance, that my parents out walking met that lady, invited her into the garden, and conversed with her for a long time. Hereupon there was some joking at supper, and it was noticed with pleasure that she had pleased my father, as she possessed the chief qualities which he, as a connoisseur, required of a woman.

After that, one thing and then another was arranged on the first storey, as if guests were expected. The linen was inspected, and some hitherto neglected furniture was thought of. When I once surprised my mother as she was

examining some old cradles in a garret, among which a very large one of walnut, inlaid with ivory and ebony, which had formerly rocked me, was specially prominent, she did not seem quite pleased when I remarked to her that such rocking-chairs were now quite out of fashion, and that one put children in a neat little basket, with their limbs free, and carried them about for show, like other wares, with a strap over the shoulder.

Enough such presentiments of a renewed domesticity exhibited themselves more frequently, and as I was in every way submissive, so by the thought of a condition which would last throughout life, a peace spread over our house and its inhabitants which it had not enjoyed for a long time.

## BOOK XVI

### PREFACE

IN the treatmēt of a multifarious biography such as this which we have ventured to undertake, as it advances, in order to make certain events intelligible and readable, we are obliged to separate some things which occur at the same time and to bring together others which can only be understood in their sequence, and so place together the whole in parts, which we can judge of judiciously as we look them over and appropriate a good deal of them.

With this reflection we open the present volume, and that it may contribute to the justification of our proceeding, we add the request that our readers should not consider this narrative, which is here continued, as connected with the end of the former book, but that it intends, by degrees, to pick up again the principal threads together, and to present persons as well as opinions and actions in a fair and well-founded sequence.

*Nemo contra deum nisi deus ipse.*

As is the common saying : " Misfortunes do not come singly," so may the same be said of good fortune and, indeed, with other circumstances which gather around us in a harmonious way ; it may be that a fate is laid upon us, or that man has the power of drawing to himself all which is related together. At least, at this time I had the experience that everything united to produce an outward and inward peace. The former was mine, because I quietly awaited the issue of what they were considering and intending for me ; but to the latter I had to attain by renewed studies.

For a long time I had not thought about Spinoza, and now I was driven to him by what was said against him. In our library I found a little book,<sup>1</sup> the author of which vehemently attacked that peculiar thinker, and, in order to go more effectually to work, he had placed opposite the title-page a picture of Spinoza, with the inscription : " Signum reprobationis in vultu gerens " (that is, " That he bears on his face the mark of reprobation "). One could not, indeed, deny this when looking at the picture, for the engraving was miserably bad, and a complete caricature ; at that, those controversialists came into my mind who first disfigure anyone whom they dislike, and then fight him as a monster.

This book, however, made no impression on me, because, above all, I had no love for controversies, but preferred always to learn of the man how he thought, rather than to hear from others how he ought to have thought. Yet curiosity led me to the article " Spinoza " in " Bayle's Dictionary," a work which, on account of its learning and acuteness, is as valuable and useful as it is ridiculous and harmful by reason of its backbiting and gossip. The article " Spinoza " aroused in me displeasure and mistrust. In the first place, the man was represented as an atheist, and his works as most reprehensible, but then it was admitted that he was a quiet, reflective man, given over to his studies, a good citizen, a sympathetic person, and a quiet individual, and so they seem quite to have forgotten the words of the Gospel, " By their fruits ye shall know them " ; for how can a life pleasing to men and God spring from corrupt principles ?

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<sup>1</sup> A German translation which appeared in 1773.



I still well remembered what calm and clearness came over me when I first turned over the posthumous pages<sup>1</sup> of that remarkable man. This effect was still quite clear to me, though I was not able to remember the particulars. I therefore hastened to the work again to which I had been so much indebted, and again the same air of peace floated over me. I gave myself up to this reading, and thought, while I looked into myself, that I had never beheld the world so clearly.

Since over this subject, even in later times, there has been so much controversy, I do not wish to be misunderstood, and will not omit to insert something about that so much feared, indeed abhorred, speculation.

Our physical as well as our social life, manners, customs, worldly wisdom, philosophy, and religion, indeed many an accidental event, all tell us that we must deny ourselves. So much which belongs to us inwardly we must not develop outwardly ; what we require from outside for the completion of our being is withdrawn from us ; on the other hand, so much is forced upon us which is as foreign as it is burdensome to us. We are robbed of what we have laboriously required, of what the world allows us, and before we are clear about the matter we find ourselves compelled to give up our personality, first of all piecemeal, and then completely. And so it has become customary that one no longer respects him who shows himself rebellious on that account ; much rather must he wear a still more pleasant face the bitterer the cup is, so that the composed spectator shall not be offended by any kind of grimace.

To solve this problem, however, Nature has endowed man with rich power, activity, and toughness. But especially does light-heartedness come to his aid, for this is given to him inalienably ; by means of this he is capable of renouncing the particular thing every moment, if only at the next moment he can reach out to something new : and so, unconsciously, we keep restoring our whole life. We put one passion in the place of another ; occupation, inclination, tastes, and hobbies, we try them all, only to exclaim at last, "All is Vanity." No one is shocked by this false, blasphemous speech, indeed, one thinks something wise and indisput-

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<sup>1</sup> Refers specially to the "Ethic of Spinoza."

able has been said. There are only a few men who can foresee such an insupportable feeling, and to avoid all partial resignations make a complete resignation once for all.

These men persuade themselves of the Eternal, the Necessary, the Established, and seek to form for themselves conceptions which are indestructible, which are not done away with by the contemplation of the Perishable, but are rather confirmed. But since herein there lies something really superhuman, such men are commonly regarded as non-human, as God-forsaken, and world-forsaken. Indeed, people hardly know what sort of horns and hoofs to impute to them.

My confidence in Spinoza rested on the tranquil effect he produced in me, and it only increased when they accused my worthy mystics of Spinozism, when I learned that Leibnitz <sup>1</sup> himself could not escape this reproach, indeed that Boerhaave, being suspected of similar sentiments, had left theology for medicine.

But let no one think that I could have subscribed to his writings and confessed to them word for word. For that no one understands another, that no one with the same words thinks the same thing as another, a talk, a reading arouses in different persons different trains of thought. This I had already seen all too plainly, and one will trust the author of "Werther" and "Faust," that he, deeply penetrated by such misunderstandings, would not himself harbour the illusion of completely understanding a man who, as the scholar of Descartes, by means of mathematical and rabbinical culture, had raised himself to the summit of thought, which even to this day seems to be the goal of all speculative efforts.

What I appropriated to myself out of him would be clearly enough represented if the visit of the Wandering Jew to Spinoza, which I had considered as a worthy ingredient of that poem, had remained written down. But I pleased myself so well with the thought, and occupied myself with it so willingly in silence, that I never came to the point of writing it down, and the conception, which would have been not without merit as a transient joke, expanded itself so that it

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<sup>1</sup> Lessing said in a communication to Jacobi: "I am afraid that Leibnitz is at heart a follower of Spinoza."

lost its charm, and I banished it from my mind as a troublesome thing. But how far the main points of that relation to Spinoza remained unforgettably in my mind, as they exercised a great influence on the course of my life, I will as shortly and concisely as possible disclose and present.

Nature works according to such eternal, necessary, divine laws that the Deity Himself could alter nothing in them. In this all men are unconsciously agreed. Only think how a natural phenomenon, which indicated understanding, reason, or even free will astonishes and alarms us.

If anything like reason shows itself in animals, we cannot recover from our amazement, for though they stand near to us, they seem to be separated from us by an infinite gulf and banished into the realm of necessity. One cannot therefore blame those thinkers who have explained wholly after the manner of a machine the infinitely ingenious but yet strictly limited construction of these creatures. If we turn to plants, our assertion is still more strikingly confirmed. Let anyone account to himself for the feeling which seizes us when the mimosa, on being touched, folds together its feather leaves in pairs, and claps down its little stalk as if upon a joint. Still higher rises that feeling, to which I will give no name, at the sight of the *Hedysarum gyrans*, which, without any visible outward cause, lifts up and down its little leaves, and seems to play with itself as with our thoughts. Imagine a pisang, to which this gift was imparted, so that it could by itself let down and lift up again by turns its huge leafy canopy, whoever should see it for the first time would shrink back in horror. So rooted within us is the idea of our superiority, that we once for all are unwilling to give any part of it to the outer world, nay, even in the case of our equals, if we could, we would detract from the same.

A similar horror overtakes us, on the other hand, when we see man act unreasonably against universally recognised moral laws, or unwisely against his own advantage and that of others. To get rid of the repugnance which we feel on such occasions, we change it into blame and disgust, and we endeavour to be rid of such a man either actually or in thought.

This opposition, which Spinoza makes so prominent, I applied very strangely to my own being, and what has been

said before is only intended to make intelligible that which follows.

I had come to regard my indwelling poetic talent altogether as Nature, the more so as I had chiefly directed it to outer Nature as its subject. The exercise of this poetic gift could indeed be excited and determined by circumstances, but its most joyful and richest action was spontaneous, nay, even against my will.

1 "Through field and forest roaming  
My little songs still humming,  
So went it all day long."

In my nightly vigils the same thing happened, and I often wished, like one of my predecessors,<sup>2</sup> to have a leather waistcoat made, and to accustom myself in the dark to fix down whatever broke out unpremeditatedly. I was so accustomed to say over a little song to myself without being able to recall it again, that I sometimes ran to the desk and did not take time to put straight a sheet of paper that was lying obliquely, but wrote down the poem from beginning to end diagonally without stirring from the spot. Just in this mood I liked to get hold of a pencil, because this gave me the characters more readily, for it sometimes happened to me that the scratching and spirting of the pen waked me out of my somnambular poetising, distracted me, and stifled a little production in its birth. For such poems I had a particular reverence, for I felt towards them somewhat as the hen does to her chickens which she sees hatched and chirping around her. My earlier desire of communicating these things by readings aloud returned to me, but to exchange them for money seemed horrible. Here I will mention an affair which took place indeed later. When my works were more and more sought after, and indeed a collection of the same was demanded, these feelings restrained me from undertaking such a thing myself, and so Himburg took advantage of my hesitation, and I unexpectedly received some copies of my collected works in print. With great audacity this unbidden publisher could even boast to me of such a service rendered to the public,

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<sup>1</sup> First lines of the poem "Der Musensohn."

<sup>2</sup> Petrarch.

and offered to send me some Berlin china if I wished it. On this occasion it occurred to me that the Jews of Berlin when they married were obliged to take a certain quantity of china, so that the royal manufactory might have a secure market. The contempt which arose towards this shameless pirate led me to suppress the vexation which I felt at this robbery. I did not reply to him, and while he was making himself comfortable with my property, I revenged myself in silence with the following verses :—

“ Fond memorials of bygone years,  
Faded flowers and consecrated hairs,  
Whitened ribbons, veils so lightly wove,  
Sad remembrance of vanished love,  
Doomed ere now by good rights to the flames ;  
These this Sosius snatches up and claims,  
As of my poetic works and honour  
He forsooth were lawful heir and owner,  
And to me this sorry comfort left,  
Tea and coffee to recall the theft !  
Take your porcelain, your gingerbread,  
For all Himburgs I am dead.”

This very Nature, however, which produced in me spontaneously so many greater and lesser works, rested often in great pauses, when for a long period of time, even with an effort, I could not produce anything, and consequently often experienced ennui. With this strong resistance the thought came to me whether I should not, on the other hand, use for my own and others' profit and advantage, the human, rational, and intellectual part of myself, and devote the interval, as I already had done and was more and more called upon to do, to the business of the world, and so leave none of my faculties unused. I found this, which seemed to proceed from those general conceptions, was so in harmony with my nature and situation that I formed the resolution of working in this way, and thereby determining the wavering and hesitation to which I had hitherto been subject. Very pleasant was it to me to think that for actual services from mankind I could demand a real reward, while, on the other hand, that lovely gift of Nature I could continue to spend disinterestedly as a sacred thing. By this consideration I rescued myself from

the bitterness which might have arisen in me, for I was obliged to notice that this talent, so sought after and admired in Germany, was treated as beyond the law's protection, and free to anybody. For not only in Berlin was piracy held to be admirable, indeed amusing, but the honourable Margrave of Baden, so praised for his virtues as Regent, and the Emperor Joseph, who justified so many hopes, favoured this, the former to his Macklot, the latter to his nobleman Von Trattner, and it was declared that the rights as well as the property of genius should be handed over unconditionally to artisans and manufacturers.

When once we complained of this to a visitor from Baden, he told us the following story : The Margravine, being a lady of activity, had established a paper manufactory, but the goods were so bad that one could not dispose of them. Thereupon the bookseller Macklot made the proposal of printing the German poets and prose writers on this paper and thus increase its value somewhat. This was accepted with open arms. We declared that this evil report was a legend, nevertheless we were amused by it. The name of Macklot at the same time became a nickname of reproach, and was frequently used in connection with mean transactions. And so a thoughtless youth, who often had to borrow, while the baseness of others made themselves rich on his talents, was sufficiently compensated by two good suggestions.

Happy children and youths wander on in a kind of intoxication, which is especially noticeable in the fact that the good, innocent creatures scarcely know how to observe, still less to recognise, the condition of their actual environment. They regard the world as stuff which they must shape, as a store of which they must possess themselves. Everything belongs to them, everything can be penetrated by their will, indeed, they often therefore lose themselves in a wild savage nature. With the better ones, however, this tendency unfolds itself into a moral enthusiasm, which, as occasion offers, is of its own accord moved to some actual or apparent good, yet often permits itself to be led and led astray.

The youth of whom we are talking was in such a case ; and if he appeared strange to men, he yet seemed welcome to many. At once, at the first meeting, you found in him

a freedom from reserve, a cheerful open-heartedness in conversation, and an opportune way of acting without hesitation. Of the latter a story or two. A violent fire had arisen in the very narrow and closely built street of the Jews. My general goodwill and the pleasure I had in giving active assistance impelled me to the place, well dressed up as I was. They had broken through from All Saints Street, and at this passage I stationed myself. I found there a great number of people occupied with carrying water, some pressing forwards with full buckets, others passing empty ones back. I soon saw that if we formed a lane by which the buckets could be passed up and down, the assistance would be doubled. I seized two full buckets and remained standing. I called others to me; from those who came on, the load was taken away, and those that were returning ranged themselves in a row on the other side. The arrangement was applauded, my address and personal sympathy met with favour, and the lane from its commencements to its burning goal was soon filled and closed up. Scarcely, however, had the cheerfulness with which this happened awakened a joyous, one might say a merry, humour in this living machine, which was working with a purpose, when the spirit of mischief and malicious joy made their appearance. Wretched fugitives, dragging on their backs their miserable property, were obliged to come into this convenient lane, and perforce remained there not unmolested. Mischievous boys squirted them, adding insult and rudeness to their misery. Soon, however, by discreet persuasion and eloquent reproofs, probably not without reference to my clean clothes, which I took little care of, their wantonness was put an end to.

Some of my friends had approached, curious to look upon the calamity, and they seemed astonished to see their companion, in shoes and silk stockings—for at that time this was the general fashion—in the midst of this wet business. I could only attract a few, others laughed and shook their heads. We stood our ground a long time, for as some went away, many decided to join on; many followed after one another to see the spectacle, and so my innocent act of daring became universally known, and the strange license became the town talk of the day.

Such a readiness in action, prompted by any good-

natured fancy, and proceeding from a happy self-consciousness, which is easily blamed by men as vanity, made our friend noticeable by other strange doings.

A very hard winter had completely covered the Main with ice and converted it into firm ground. The liveliest society, both of business and pleasure, was stirring on the ice. Endless skating paths and wide smoothly frozen surfaces swarmed with the moving multitude. I did not fail to be there from early morning, and when my mother came out later, driving to see the spectacle, I was almost frozen through, being lightly clad. She sat in the carriage in her red velvet fur coat, which, held together on her chest by a strong, golden cord and tassel, looked quite stately. "Give me, dear mother, your fur," I cried out on the instant, without further reflection, "I am terribly frozen." She, too, took no thought; in a moment I had on the furs of purple colour, which, reaching to the calves, edged with sable and adorned with gold, did not contrast badly with the cap which I wore. Thus carelessly I went up and down; the crowd, too, was so great that one did not specially notice the strange appearance, but only to some extent, for often later it was regarded as among my eccentricities both in earnest and in jest.

After these recollections of happy and unconscious actions, we will continue the peculiar thread of our narrative.

A clever Frenchman<sup>1</sup> has said, "If any intelligent head has attracted the attention of the public by a meritorious work, it does its best to prevent him from ever doing a similar thing again." This is so true: something good and intellectual is produced in the silent seclusion of youth, applause is gained, but independence is lost; they tear his concentrated talent to distraction because they think they can pull off and appropriate to themselves some of his personality. In this sense I received many invitations, or, rather, not exactly invitations; a friend, an acquaintance, would propose with much importunity to introduce me here or there. The quasi-stranger, announced as a bear because of his frequent unfriendly refusals, then, again, as Voltaire's Huron<sup>2</sup> or

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<sup>1</sup> D'Alembert, the famous encyclopædist, 1717-83.

<sup>2</sup> In Voltaire's novel, "L'Ingenu."



Cumberland's<sup>1</sup> West Indian, like a child of Nature with so many talents, excited curiosity, and so in various families one was busied with suitable negotiations in order to see him.

Among others, a friend one evening entreated me to go with him to a little concert which was to be given in a Calvinistic mercantile house of standing. It was already late, yet, as I loved to do everything on the spur of the moment, I followed him, properly dressed as usual. We entered a room on the ground floor, which was the special large sitting-room. There was a numerous company; a piano stood in the middle, at which the only daughter of the house sat down at once and played with considerable ease and grace.<sup>2</sup> I stood at the lower end of the piano, so as to be near enough to observe her form and demeanour; she had something childlike in her behaviour, the motions which her playing obliged her to make were unconstrained and easy.

After the sonata was finished, she stepped to the end of the piano towards me; we greeted one another without further conversation, for a quartette had already begun. At the close of it I stepped somewhat nearer and paid some compliment, such as how pleased I was that my first acquaintance with her should also have made me acquainted with her talent. She knew how to make a kind reply, and kept her position as I did mine. I could observe that she regarded me attentively, and that I was really standing to be seen, which I could quite well be pleased at, since I, too, was given something graceful to look at. Meanwhile we looked at one another, and I will not deny that I thought I felt an attractive power of the gentlest kind. The moving to and fro of the company and her performances prevented me from any kind of nearer approach that evening, but I must confess that it was a pleasant feeling when, at parting, the mother gave me to understand that they hoped to see me again soon, and the daughter, with some friendliness, seemed to join in. I did not fail, after a suitable interval, to repeat my visit, since a cheerful, intellectual conversation was formed which did not seem to prophesy any tie of passion.

In the meantime, the hospitality of our house once

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<sup>1</sup> 1732-1811. Secretary to the Board of Trade, writer of numerous comedies, called by Goldsmith "the Terence of England."

<sup>2</sup> Lili Schönemann, at this time sixteen years old.

laid open caused my good parents and myself much inconvenience ; in my tendency, which was always directed to notice what was above me, to recognise it, to demand it, and where possible to imitate it creatively, I had not got any further. The people, in so far as they were good, were pious, and in so far as they were active, they were unwise and often incapable. The former could not help me, and the latter confused me. One remarkable case I have carefully written down.

At the beginning of the year 1775, Jung, afterwards called Stilling, from the Lower Rhine, announced that he was coming to Frankfort, being called to undertake an important eye cure. He was welcomed by me and my parents, and we offered him quarters.

Herr von Lersner, a worthy man advanced in years, everywhere esteemed for his education and guidance of princely children, and for his wise behaviour at court and on journeys, had for long suffered the misfortune of total blindness. Now Jung had for several years, with good confidence and quiet courage, performed many operations for cataract on the Lower Rhine, and thereby gained a widespread reputation. The honesty of his soul, the reliability of his character, and his genuine piety gained for him universal confidence ; this extended up the river by means of various business relations. Herr von Lersner and his friends, advised by an intelligent physician, decided to send for the successful oculist, though a Frankfort merchant, on whom the cure had failed, earnestly dissuaded them. But what was a single case against so many which had been successful ? So Jung came, attracted by a considerable remuneration, which usually he had renounced hitherto. He came to increase his reputation, confident and cheerful, and we congratulated ourselves on having such an excellent and lively companion at table.

After several medical preparations, the cataract in both eyes was finally punctured. We were highly excited. It was said that the patient had seen immediately after the operation, until the bandage again took away the daylight. But it was noticeable that Jung was not cheerful and that something weighed upon his mind, as indeed on further examination he confessed to me that he felt anxious about the outcome of the operation. Ordinarily, and I had myself

often seen it in Strasburg, nothing in the world seemed easier, as it had succeeded with Stilling a hundred times. After completing the painless cut through the insensitive cornea, the dull lens sprang forward of itself at the slightest pressure, the patient at once saw objects, and had only to wait with bandaged eyes until a complete cure permitted him to use the precious organ at his own will and convenience. How many a poor man for whom Jung had procured this happiness had invoked the blessing of God and reward from on high upon his benefactor, which would now be paid through this rich man !

Jung confessed that this time it had not gone off so easily and successfully ; the lens had not sprung forward, he was obliged to draw it out, and, indeed, as it had grown to the socket, to loosen it. This could not be done without some force. He now reproached himself for having operated on the other eye also. But it had been resolved to deal with them both at the same time, and one had not thought of such a contingency, and as this was the case they did not at once know what to do. Suffice it to say the second lens did not come out of itself ; it had also to be loosened and got out with difficulty.

One cannot describe or unfold in what an unfortunate condition such a benevolent, good-natured, pious man found himself. Some general reflection upon such a state of mind will perhaps here not be out of place.

To work for his own moral culture is the simplest and most practical thing which a man can propose to himself ; the impulse to it is innate in him ; he is led to this in civil life, nay, forced to it by human understanding and by love.

Stilling lived in a moral religious feeling of love ; without sympathy, without responsive goodwill, he could not exist ; he demanded mutual affection ; where he was not known he was silent ; where, though known, he was not loved, he was sad ; therefore he was most at home with those well-disposed persons who, in a limited, quiet, professional calling with some degree of comfort, are busied in perfecting themselves. These now succeed perhaps in putting away vanity, in renouncing the pursuit of outward honour, in acquiring discretion in speech, and in exercising towards companions and neighbours a uniformly friendly behaviour. Often

there lies beneath this an obscure spiritual groundwork, modified by individuality ; such persons, when accidentally excited, lay great stress on their empirical career ; they regard everything as a supernatural determination, in the conviction that God intervenes directly.

In such men there is a certain disposition to persist in their state ; at the same time they will let themselves be pushed and led, but have a certain indecision about acting themselves. This increases by the failure of the most sensible plans, as well as by the accidental success of unforeseen circumstances concurring favourably. Now, as an attentive, manly behaviour is embittered by such a way of life, the way of falling into such a condition is worthy of consideration and reflection.

What people of such like thoughts talk about with greatest pleasure are the so-called awakenings, conversions to which we will not deny their psychological value. It is precisely what we in scientific and poetic matters call *aperçu* (intuition), the becoming conscious of a great maxim, which is always an operation of the mind akin to genius. We arrive at it by insight, neither by reflection, nor by teaching, nor by tradition. Here it is the perception of the moral power which is anchored in faith, and so in the midst of the waves will feel itself in proud security.

Such an *aperçu* affords the discoverer the greatest joy, because, in an original manner, it points him to the Infinite ; it requires no length of time for conviction ; it leaps forth whole and perfect in a moment, hence the friendly old French rhyme :—

“ En peu d’heure  
Dieu labeure.”<sup>1</sup>

External collisions often cause such a conversion to break out violently, and a man thinks he sees signs and wonders.

Confidence and affection bound me most heartily to Stilling. I had also exercised a good and happy influence on his career, and it was quite in accordance with his nature to preserve in a fine grateful heart all that had been done for him, but intercourse with him at that time of my life

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<sup>1</sup> Goethe has elsewhere translated this into German, “ In wenig Stunden hat Gott das Rechte gefunden.”

neither cheered nor advanced me. I was indeed willing to let every one arrange and develop the riddle of his days as he wished, but this manner of ascribing everything good which happened to us in a reasonable way in an adventurous course of life to an immediate divine influence, appeared to me too presumptuous, and the way of regarding everything with evil consequences where, due to overhaste or neglect arising from our levity or self-conceit, as a divine pedagogy, would not suit my mind at all. I could therefore only listen to my good friend, but could give him no cheering reply, yet I let him go on as he wished, as I did with so many others, and defended him afterwards as before, when those with too worldly a spirit did not hesitate to wound his gentle nature. Therefore I never allowed the remark of a roguish fellow to come to his ears who once quite earnestly exclaimed: "No, indeed, if I were on such good terms with God as Jung is, I would not pray to the Most High for money but for wisdom and good counsel, so that I should not make so many mistakes which cost money, and draw after them wretched years of retribution.

Indeed it was not the time for jests and mischief. Several days passed away between fear and hope, the former waxed, the latter waned and was lost altogether, the eyes of the excellent patient man became inflamed, and there was no doubt that the operation had been a failure.

The condition into which our friend came admits of no description; he was struggling against the deepest despair of the worst kind. For what had he not lost in this case! In the first place the greatest thanks of one restored to light, the noblest (reward) which the doctor can enjoy; the confidence of so many others needing help; his credit, while the interruption of his practice left his family in a helpless situation. Enough, we played through from beginning to end the unpleasing drama of "Job," for the faithful man himself took over the part of the reproving friends. He wished to regard this occurrence as a punishment for his former faults. It seemed to him as if he had wrongfully regarded the eye cure, which he accidentally had possession of, as a divine call to that business; he reproached himself because he had not thoroughly studied this important department, but had superficially treated his cases with luck. In the instant, there came before his soul what his

enemies said of him ; he fell into doubt as to whether it was not true ; and it pained him all the more deeply when he had to look upon the levity of others, so dangerous for pious men, alas, too, their conceit and vanity as retribution for his course of life. In such moments he lost himself, and though we might come to an understanding with ourselves, we at last only arrived at the rational and necessary conclusion that the ways of God are past finding out.

I should have been still more hurt in my enterprising, cheerful mood, if I had not, in my customary way, subjected these conditions of the mind to a serious friendly consideration, and in my own way explained it to myself, only it troubled me to see my good mother so poorly rewarded for her care and domestic trouble ; she did not, however, feel it herself in her incessantly active equanimity. I felt most sorry for my father. For my sake he had enlarged a strictly private household with good grace, and at table, when the presence of strangers attracted familiar friends and travellers passing through, he enjoyed very gladly a merry, even paradoxical, conversation, in which I, by all kinds of dialectical pugilism, provided him with great amusement and friendly laughter ; for I had the ungodly way of disputing everything, but was only so far obstinate that he who maintained the right in all cases was made laughable. In these last weeks this was now not to be thought of, for the happiest and most cheerful events occasioned by successful secondary cases of our friend, who had been made so unhappy by the failure of the principal cure, could not touch, still less give a different turn to his gloomy mood.

In particular one thing made us laugh. An old blind beggar Jew from Isenburg in the greatest wretchedness came to Frankfort. He could scarcely find a lodging, scarcely the poorest food and attendance, but his tough Oriental nature helped him so well that he was enraptured to find himself completely healed and without the least trouble. When asked whether the operation had hurt, he said in his hyperbolical manner, "If I had a million eyes, I would have them operated on one after another for half a crown." On his departure he behaved quite as eccentrically in the street ; he thanked God in good Old Testament style, and praised the Lord and the wondrous man whom He had sent. So he walked slowly on to the bridge through this

long commercial street. Buyers and sellers stepped out of their shops, astounded by such a strange pious enthusiasm expressing itself passionately before all the world ; all were moved to sympathy to such an extent that, without any asking or begging, he was blessed with ample gifts for his travelling expenses.

But such a cheerful incident could scarcely be mentioned in our circle, for if the very poorest, in his sandy home beyond the Main, could be counted happy in his domestic misery, on the other hand, this man of wealth and dignity on this side of the river had missed the priceless comfort so much expected.

Sickening, therefore, was it for our good Jung to receive the thousand guilders, which, being stipulated for in any case, were honourably paid by the magnanimous man. This ready money was to liquidate a part of his debts on his return, which were a burden in his mournful and unfortunate circumstances.

And so he left us inconsolable, for he saw before him on his return the reception of an anxious wife and the changed reception of his well-wishing parents-in-law, who, as sureties for so many debts of the all too confiding man, might think they had made a mistake in the choice of a life's companion for their daughter. He could already foresee in this and that house, from this and that window, the scorn and contempt of those who already did not wish him well when he was fortunate ; his practice, interrupted by his absence and radically threatened by this failure, caused him the greatest anxiety.

So we took leave of him, on our side, however, not without hope, for his strong nature, supported by belief in supernatural aid, could not but inspire a quiet and modest confidence in his friends.

## BOOK XVII

IF I again take up the story of my relation to Lili, I must remember that I spent the pleasantest hours partly in the presence of her mother, partly alone with her. From my writings they gave me credit for knowledge of the human heart, as it was then called, and in this sense our conversations were morally interesting in every way.

But how can one talk of inward matters without making intimate disclosures to one another? It was not long before Lili, in a quiet hour, related to me the story of her youth. She had grown up in the enjoyment of all social advantages and worldly pleasures. She described to me her brothers, her relations, and her most intimate circumstances, only her mother remained respectfully in the background.

Little weaknesses, too, were mentioned, and she could not deny that she had often remarked in herself a certain gift of attracting people, with which at the same time was united a peculiar way of letting them go again. Thus, by talking on this side and on that, we came to the important point that she had exercised this gift upon me, too, but had been punished, however, because she also had been attracted by me. These confessions came out from so pure and child-like a nature that she made me quite absolutely her own.

A mutual need, a habit now came of seeing each other, but how many a day and how many an evening till far into the night should I have had to deny myself if I had not made up my mind to see her in her own circles. From this there arose manifold pain.

My relation to her personally was as if to a beautiful, loving, cultivated daughter; it was like my earlier attachments, but was of a higher kind. Of outward circumstances, however, of the meeting and mingling of social ranks, I had not thought. An irresistible longing prevailed in me, I could not be without her, nor she without me, but in the environment and by the interference of some members of



her circle, how many days were failures, how many hours went wrong !

The history of pleasure parties which ended in displeasure, a dilatory brother, whom I was to follow after, who would complete his business slowly with the greatest deliberation, I daresay with some malicious joy, and thereby destroy the whole well thought out arrangement ; also meeting and failing to meet, impatience and self-denial, all these pains which, if they were set out in detail in a romance, would certainly find sympathetic readers I must here omit. But in order to bring this contemplated representation of a living experience nearer to youthful sympathy, I may here insert some songs, well known indeed, but perhaps here particularly impressive.

1 " Heart, my heart, O what hath changed thee ?

What doth weigh on thee so sore ?

What hath from thyself estranged thee

That I scarcely know thee more ?

Gone is all which thou held dearest,

Gone the care which thou kept nearest,

Gone thy toils and after-bliss,

Ah ! how couldst thou come to this ?

Binds thee there her bloom so youthful,

That divine and lovely form,

That sweet look, so good and truthful,

With an all-resistless charm ?

If I swear no more to see her,

If I man myself and flee her,

In a moment more, alack !

Straight to her I hie me back.

She with magic net enfolds me,

That defies my utmost skill ;

Lovely, wanton maid, she holds me,

Holds me fast against my will,

In her magic ring who finds him

After all her ways must mind him,

Ah, how great the change to me !

Love, when wilt thou set me free ? "

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The poem is entitled " Neue Liebe Neues Leben."

<sup>1</sup> “ Ah, against my will why dost thou press me  
Into scenes so bright ?  
Had I not—good youth—so much to bless me  
In the lovely night ? ’

In my little chamber close I found me,  
In the moon’s cold beams ;  
And their quivering light fell softly round me,  
While I lay in dreams.

Dreams they were of golden hours of steady  
And unmingled joy,  
For within my breast had I already  
Felt the lovely boy.

Is it I still whom that gay card-table,  
’Mid so many lights,  
Meeting faces so intolerable,  
To thy side invites ?

Ah, the Spring’s fresh fields no longer cheer me,  
Flowers no sweetness bring ;  
Where thou, angel, art, all sweets are near me,  
Where thou art is Spring.”

If one has read these songs aloud to himself attentively, or rather sung them over with feeling, a breath of the fullness of these happy hours will certainly float over him.

But we will not hastily take leave of that greater, glittering society without adding some remarks, especially for the making clear the close of the second poem.

She whom I was accustomed to see in simple, seldom-changed household dress, appeared to me in the splendour of elegant fashion, and still she was quite the same. Her grace, her friendliness remained alike, only I might say that her gift of attracting was more prominent ; it may be that as she stood here before many people, she found occasion to express herself in a more lively manner and to exhibit herself on many sides, according as one or another approached her ; enough, I could not deny that these strangers were very disagreeable to me on the one hand, but I would not

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<sup>1</sup> The poem is entitled “ An Belinden.”

for much have renounced the pleasure of getting to know her social virtues, and of seeing that she was adapted for wider and more universal conditions.

It was still the same bosom, though covered with adornment, which had disclosed its inmost secrets to me, and into which I could look as clearly as into my own ; it was still the same lips which had so early described the condition in which she had grown up, in which she had spent her years. Every mutual look, every accompanying smile expressed the hidden, noble understanding, and I myself, here in the middle of the crowd, was astonished at the secret, innocent agreement which we found in the most human and natural way.

But with the coming of spring the pleasant freedom of the country was to knit such relations closer. Offenbach, on the Main, showed even at that time the considerable beginnings of a city which promised to build itself up in course of time. Beautiful, and for that time magnificent, buildings had already appeared ; Uncle Bernard, to call him by his family title, occupied the largest—extensive factory buildings were adjacent ; D'Orville, a lively young man with pleasant qualities, lived opposite. Adjoining gardens, terraces reaching to the Main, admitted everywhere a free passage to the lovely surrounding country and put visitors and dwellers in great comfort. The lover could not find a more desirable place for his feelings.

I lived at the house of John André, and while I must here make mention of this man who afterwards made himself sufficiently well known, I must allow myself a slight digression to give some idea of the state of the opera at that time.

In Frankfort, at this time, Marchand was director of the theatre, and endeavoured in his own person to accomplish what was possible. He was a handsome, tall, and well-formed man in his best years ; amiability and effeminacy seemed to predominate in him ; his presence on the stage, therefore, was pleasant enough. He might have had as much voice as at that time was required for the execution of musical works, and therefore he took trouble to adapt the smaller and larger French operas.

The part of the father in Gretry's opera of " Beauty and the Beast " he was particularly successful in, and he managed to make most expressive gestures in the vision which was

arranged behind the stage. This opera, which was successful in its way, approached, however, the lofty style, and was calculated to excite the most tender feelings. On the other hand, a demon of realism had got possession of the opera-house ; operas founded on situations and trades were brought out. Huntsmen, coopers, and I know not what else, were produced. André chose for himself the part of the potter. He had written the poem for himself, and upon that part of the text which belonged to him he had expended all his musical talent.

I was lodging with him, and will only say so much as is here demanded of this ever-ready poet and composer.

He was a man of an innate lively talent ; actually domiciled in Offenbach as a mechanic and manufacturer, he hovered between the bandmaster and the dilettante. In the hope of meriting the former title he worked very seriously so as to gain a firm footing in the science of music ; in the latter capacity he was inclined to repeat his own compositions endlessly. Among those who at that time showed themselves most active in filling and enlivening the circle one should mention the pastor Ewald, who, intellectual and cheerful in society, understood how to carry on the studies connected with his duties and office quietly by himself, as indeed, later on, he made himself honourably known within the theological province ; in the circle of that time he must be remembered as indispensable, quick in comprehension and in retort.

Lili's pianoforte playing completely bound our good André to our society ; with instructing, directing, executing, there were few hours of the day and night in which he did not enter into the family life, into the social order of the day.

Bürger's "*Leonore*,"<sup>1</sup> then but newly known and received by the Germans with enthusiasm, was composed by him, and he produced it willingly and repeatedly.

I, too, who often recited animatedly, was ready to declaim it ; at that time they did not get weary with the repeated repetition of the same thing. If the company were given the choice which of us two they would rather hear, the decision was often in my favour.

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<sup>1</sup> It appeared in the autumn of 1773.

But all this, however it may have been, served the lovers as prolonging the time of their being together ; they could find no end to the thing, and the good André, by the persuasion of both, was easily kept in uninterrupted activity until midnight repeating his music. The two lovers thereby assured themselves of a worthy and indispensable presence. If we walked out early in the morning from the house we found ourselves in the freshest air, but not exactly in the country. Stately buildings, which at that time would have done honour to a city ; gardens, arranged in parterre easily overlooked, with level flower- and other ornamental beds ; a free view over the river to the opposite bank, often at an early hour an active navigation of rafts and nimble market ships and canoes ; a gently gliding living world, in harmony with the tender feelings of love. Even the solitary rippling of the waves and rustling of the reeds of a softly moving stream was most stirring, and did not fail to spread a decidedly tranquillising magic over those who were walking by. A cheerful sky in the finest season of the year overarched the whole, and how pleasant in the morning to find again a dear companionship surrounded by such scenes !

Should, however, such a way of life seem to a serious reader too slack and too trivial, let him reflect that between what is here described by way of explanation in immediate sequence, there intervened days and weeks of renunciation, other engagements and occupations, even intolerable weariness.

Men and women were busily engaged in their spheres of duty. I, too, did not delay in consideration of the present and future to attend to my obligations, and found time enough to finish that to which my talent and my passion irresistibly impelled me.

The earliest morning hours I devoted to poetry, the middle of the day was given up to worldly business, which was dealt with in a quite peculiar manner. My father, a thorough and even elegant lawyer, managed his own business himself, which the administration of his own property and his connections with valued friends put upon him ; and though his position as Imperial Councillor did not permit him to practise, yet he was at hand as legal adviser to many a friend, while he signed the writings pre-

pared by the regular advocate ; each such signature brought him in a consideration.

This activity of his had now become more lively through my presence, and I could well observe that he prized my talent higher than my practice, and therefore did all he could to leave me time enough for my poetical studies and labours. Sound and capable, but slow in conception and execution, he studied the Acts as secret referee, and when we came together he would put the case before me, and I would finish the execution of it with so much readiness that he felt the greatest paternal joy, and he did not omit to declare that "if I had been a stranger to him he should envy me."

To make these matters still easier a scribe was associated with us, whose character and nature, if well represented, would improve and adorn a novel. After school years profitably spent, in which he became fully master of Latin and had acquired other useful branches of knowledge, a too dissipated academic life interrupted the remaining course of his days, he dragged himself along for a time with an infirm body in poverty, and only came later into better circumstances by the aid of a beautiful handwriting and readiness at accounts. Employed by some advocates he became, by degrees, fairly well acquainted with the formalities of legal procedure, and by his integrity and punctuality gained every one whom he served as a patron. He had also laid our family under obligations, and was always at hand in matters of law and accounts. He also, on his side, took up some of our ever-increasing business, which was concerned not only with law matters but with various commissions, appointments, and forwarding of goods. In the Council House he knew all the passages and turnings, at both the burgomaster's audiences he had admittance in his way, and as from his first entrance into office, during the time of his uncertain behaviour, he had been acquainted with many of the new councillors, some of whom had only just risen to be assessors, he had gained for himself a certain confidence, which one might well call a sort of influence. All this he knew how to apply to the profit of his patrons, and as his health compelled him to exercise his activity with moderation, you always found him ready to execute every commission, every appointment carefully.

His presence was not displeasing ; of slender frame and

regular features his manner was not obtrusive, but not without the expression of the certainty of his conviction of what was to be done ; moreover, he was cheerful and skilful in removing hindrances. He might be well advanced in the forties, and I regret (I may repeat what I said before) that I have never introduced him as the driving wheel in the mechanism of some novel. In the hopes that my serious readers will be more or less satisfied by what I have related, I may venture again to turn to that bright point of time in which love and friendship showed themselves in their most beautiful light.

It lies in the nature of such intimacies that birthdays should be celebrated carefully, joyfully, and with great variety ; in honour of the birthday of the pastor Ewald the following song was written :—

1 “ When met in sweet communion,  
 When warmed with love and wine,  
 We'll sing this song of union,  
 This simple song of mine.  
 The God who first united  
 Shall keep us one for aye ;  
 The flame which he first lighted  
 Shall never, never die.”

Since this song has been preserved until the present day, and there is scarcely a cheerful society at a festival where it is not revived again with joy, we recommend it to those who come after us, and we wish that all who recite or sing it may have the same pleasure and inward satisfaction as we had then, without thinking of any wider world, but felt ourselves in that narrow circle expanded to a world.

But it will now be expected that Lili's birthday, which on 23rd June 1775 was repeated for the seventeenth time, should be celebrated in a special way. She had promised to come to Offenbach at midday, and I must confess that the friends with a fortunate agreement had laid aside all customary compliments at this festival, and had prepared themselves only with the sincere affection which was worthy of her for her reception and entertainment.

Occupied with such pleasant duties, I saw the sun go

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1 From the poem entitled “ Bundeslied.”

down which announced a cheerful day to follow and promised its joyous beaming presence at our festival, when Lili's brother George, who could not dissemble, came into the room somewhat rudely, and without any consideration gave us to understand that our festival for the morrow was interrupted. He did not know how or why, but his sister wished him to say that it was quite impossible for her to come to Offenbach by midday and to take part at the intended festival. She hoped, however, to manage her arrival towards evening. She felt and knew quite well how unpleasant it would be to me and our friends, but begged me as pressingly as she could to invent something by which the unpleasantness of the news, which she left to me to announce, might be softened, indeed smoothed over ; she would give me her best thanks for it.

I was silent for a moment, but had soon composed myself, and, as if by a heavenly inspiration, found what was to be done. "Hasten, George," I cried, "tell her not to be disturbed, but to do her best to come towards evening ; I promise that this very misfortune shall be turned into a festival." The boy was curious and wanted to know how, but this was steadfastly denied him, though he called to his aid all the arts and power which the brother of our beloved one can presume to exercise.

Scarcely was he gone than I walked up and down in my room with singular complacency, and with the joyful, free feeling that here was the opportunity of showing myself her servant in a brilliant manner ; I stitched together several sheets of paper with beautiful silk, as was fitting for an occasional poem, and hastened to write the title :

"She comes not : A mournful family piece, which, by the visitation of Providence, will be performed on the 23rd June 1775, at Offenbach on the Main, in the most natural manner. The action lasts from morning till evening."

Since of this joke neither the original nor the copy is to hand, I have often inquired after it, but have never found anything of it again ; I must therefore compose it anew, which, in general, is not difficult.

The scene is at d'Orville's house and garden at Offenbach ; the action opens with the domestics, in which each plays exactly his part, and the arrangements for the festival



are made very evident. Children come in, represented to the life ; then the master and the lady with her peculiar activity and duties ; then comes, while everything is in a certain hurried businesslike confusion, the indefatigable neighbour, Hans André, the composer ; he seats himself at the piano, and calls all together to hear and to try his new festival song. He draws the whole house towards him, but all soon go off to attend to pressing duties ; one is called away by another, one is in need of another, and the intervention of the gardener draws our attention to the garden and water scenes ; garlands, bands with inscriptions of the most delicate kind, nothing is forgotten.

When they were all assembled for the pleasantest part of the matter, a messenger steps in who, as a kind of amusing go-between, was also entitled to play a part, and who, having had plenty of tips, could observe casually as it were what relations were existing. He is rather pleased with his packet, expects a glass of wine and a wheaten roll, and after some roguish hesitation hands over the dispatches. The master of the house lets his arms drop, the paper falls to the ground : " Let me go to the table, let me go to the wardrobe, that I may brush ! "

The intellectual intercourse of vivacious persons is distinguished before all by a symbolical style of speech and gesture. There arises among them a sort of thieves' language which, while it makes the initiated very happy, remains unobserved by strangers, or, if observed, is disagreeable.

There belonged to one of Lili's most pleasing peculiarities the one which is here expressed by the word and gesture of brushing, and which showed itself when anything offensive was said or told, especially when one sat at table or chanced to be near any flat surface.

This had its origin from an infinitely attractive incivility which she once committed when a stranger, sitting near her at table, brought forward something unseemly. Without altering her mild countenance, she brushed with her right hand quite prettily over the table-cloth, and pushed off everything which she reached with this gentle motion composedly on to the floor, I know not what all—knives, forks, bread, salt-cellar, and something also belonging to her neighbour—every one was alarmed ; the servants ran up ; no one knew what it all meant, except the observing

ones, who were delighted that she had answered and extinguished an impropriety in such a delicate manner.

Here now was found a symbol for the refusal of anything disagreeable, which still often appears in excellent, worthy, well-meaning, but not thoroughly cultivated society. The movement of the right hand as meaning rejection we all allowed ; the actual brushing away of the objects she only afterwards indulged in moderately and with good taste.

When, therefore, the poet gives to the master of the house this desire for brushing, a sort of mimicry, which had become with us a second nature, appears, one sees at once its significance and efficacy, for while he threatens to brush off everything from all flat surfaces, everything hinders him ; they try to calm him, until at last he throws himself exhausted on to a seat.

“ What has happened ? ” they exclaim. “ Is she ill ? ” “ Is anyone dead ? ”

“ Read, read,” cries d’Orville, “ there it lies on the ground.”

The letter was picked up, they read it, and exclaim : “ She comes not.”

The great alarm had prepared them for a greater, but she was well, nothing had happened to her, no one of the family had taken any harm ; hope remained for the evening.

André, who meanwhile had kept on playing his music, came running up at last, consoling, and seeking to be consoled. Pastor Ewald and his wife came in characteristically, feeling vexed, yet sensible, renouncing with reluctance, yet putting things right in subdued fashion. But everything went on in a perfect muddle, until the exemplary, calm Uncle Bernard appears, expecting a good breakfast and a commendable dinner, and he is the only one who sees the matter from the right point of view ; he makes soothing, sensible speeches, and brings all into equilibrium, exactly as in the Greek tragedy a god knows how to clear up the confusion of the greatest heroes with a few words.

This was all written down during a part of the night with a flowing pen and handed over to a messenger, who was instructed to enter Offenbach with the letter punctually at ten o’clock.

I awoke to see one of the clearest mornings, with the intention and arrangement of arriving at Offenbach punctu-

ally at ten o'clock. I was received with the strangest charivari of replies ; the interrupted festival was scarcely hinted at, they scolded and abused me because I had taken them off so well. The domestics were pleased at being introduced on the same stage with their superiors ; only the children, as the most decided and most incorruptible little realists, obstinately assured us that they had not spoken so, and that everything had gone quite differently from the way in which it was here written down. I appeased them with some foretastes of the dessert, and they loved me as much as ever. A joyful midday meal, a moderation of all the festivities put us into the mood for receiving Lili without splendour, yet perhaps all the more heartily. She came, and was welcomed by cheerful, nay, jovial faces, almost surprised that her staying away permitted so much cheerfulness. They told her everything ; they laid the whole thing before her, and she, in her dear and sweet way, thanked me as she only could.

It required no remarkable acuteness to perceive that her staying away from the festival dedicated to her was not accidental, but was caused by the gossiping with regard to the relation between us. Meanwhile this did not have the slightest influence on our sentiments or our behaviour. At this season of the year there could not fail to be a thronging of varied society from the city. Frequently I did not come into the company till late in the evening, and found her apparently sympathetic, and since I often appeared only for a few hours, I was glad to be useful to her in any way, in undertaking some greater or smaller commission for her. And it is indeed this service which is the most delightful that can befall a man, as the old chivalry romances understood how to intimate in an obscure but powerful fashion. That she ruled over me was not to be concealed, and she might well be proud of it, for here the victor and the vanquished triumph, and both find comfort in an equal pride.

My repeated, but only short, co-operation in these parties was therefore all the more effective. John André always had a store of music ; I, too, brought something new of others or my own ; poetical and musical blossoms rained down. It was an altogether brilliant time, a certain exaltation prevailed in the company, and there were no dull

moments. Quite without question the others sympathised with this relation of ours : for where affection and passion come out in their own bold nature they give courage to timid spirits, who henceforth do not comprehend why they should conceal their equally good rights. One therefore became aware of more or less concealed relations which now intertwined themselves without reserve, others, which did not acknowledge themselves so well, still glided on pleasantly under cover.

If I could not, on account of multifarious business, pass the days out there with her, yet the bright evenings gave us opportunity for prolonged meeting in the open air. Loving souls will receive with pleasure the following incident.

It was a condition of which it stands written : " I sleep but my heart wakes." The bright and dark hours were alike ; the light of day could not outshine the light of love, and the night through the radiance of affection was changed to the brightest day.

We had been walking round in the open country under the clearest starlight till it was late, and after I had escorted her and the company home from door to door, and had finally taken leave of her, I felt so little inclined for sleep that I did not hesitate to start on another ramble. I went along the road to Frankfort, giving myself over to my thoughts and hopes ; I sat down on a seat in the pure stillness of the night under the gleaming starry heaven to belong only to myself and to her.

I noticed, quite near, a sound which was difficult to explain ; it was not a rattling nor a rustling, and on nearer attention I discovered that it was under the ground and the working of some little animal. It might be a hedgehog or weasel, or whatever creature works at such hours.

After that I went farther towards the city, and arrived at the Röderberg, where I recognised, by their chalk-white gleam, the steps which lead up to the vineyards. I climbed up, sat down, and fell asleep.

When I awoke again, the dawn was already shed around, I found myself opposite the high rampart, which in earlier times had been erected against the mountains on this side. Sachsenhausen lay before me, light mists indicated the course of the river, it was cool and welcome to me.

There I stayed till the sun's rising gradually behind

illuminated the opposite side. It was the region in which I was to see again my beloved, and I turned slowly back to the paradise which surrounded her yet sleeping.

But owing to my increasing circle of business, which I endeavoured for her sake to extend and master, my visits to Offenbach became more sparing, and thereby gave rise to a certain painful embarrassment ; yet it may be remarked that one actually postpones and loses the present for the sake of the future.

As my prospects were now improving more and more, I considered them to be more significant than they really were, and I thought the more about a speedy decision, when so open a relationship could not continue much longer without becoming uncomfortable. And, as is usual in such cases, we did not say it expressly to one another, but the feeling of a mutual unconditional satisfaction, the full conviction that a separation was impossible, the equal confidence we placed in one another, all this produced such a seriousness that I who had determined not again to tie myself to a troublesome connection, yet found myself enmeshed in this without the certainty of a favourable result, and was overpowered with heaviness of mind, in order to save myself from which I mingled myself more in indifferent worldly affairs, from which I could only hope to win profit and contentment with the hand of my beloved.

In this strange situation, of which many of us may have had a painful experience, a family friend came to our assistance, who saw through all the relations of the persons and circumstances very clearly. Her name was Mlle Delf ; she managed, with her elder sister, a little mercantile house in Heidelberg, and had on various occasions received much favour from the great Frankfort banking business. She knew and loved Lili from her youth up ; she was a person of much individuality, of a serious, virile appearance, and an even, downright, hasty gait. She had special reason for adapting herself to the world, and she understood it, at least, in a certain sense. One could not call her intriguing, she was wont to look at the conditions for a long time, and to carry out her intentions in silence ; but then she had the gift of seeing the occasion, and when she saw the sentiments of persons wavering between doubt and resolution, when everything was a question of decision, she knew how to put

such force of character into it that she did not readily fail to carry out her purpose. She certainly had no egoistic aims ; to have done something, to have completed something, especially to have brought about a marriage was sufficient reward. Our position she had seen long since ; on repeated visits she had investigated the matter, so that she at last persuaded herself this attachment was to be favoured ; these plans honestly but not sufficiently pursued and taken in hand must be supported, and this little romance be brought to a finish as speedily as possible.

For many years she had possessed the confidence of Lili's mother. Introduced by me into my house she had made herself pleasant to my parents, for just this brusque manner in an imperial city is not forbidding, and backed by understanding is even welcome. She knew very well our wishes and our hopes, her love of activity perceived in this a commission, in short, she negotiated with the parents. How she commenced it, how she put aside the difficulties which may have met her, I do not know ; but she came one evening with their consent : " Take each other's hands," she cried, in her pathetic yet commanding manner. I stood opposite to Lili and offered her my hand ; she laid her's, not hesitatingly, but slowly, on mine. After a deep breath we fell with animation into each other's arms.

It was a strange decree of the high overruling Providence that I, in the course of my singular life's history, should also experience the feelings of a bridegroom.

I can venture to say that for a well-bred man it is the pleasantest of all recollections. It is delightful to recall those feelings which are with difficulty expressed and are scarcely to be explained. The past condition is completely changed, the worst antagonisms are removed, the most obstinate differences are smoothed over, prompting nature, the ever-warning reason, the tyrannising impulses, the reflecting law which formerly kept up an ever-continuing strife within us, all these now approach in a friendly unity and at the universally solemnised pious festival, what was forbidden is commanded, and what was interdicted is raised to an indispensable duty.

But with moral approval it will be perceived that from this moment onwards a certain change in my feelings took place. If the loved one had hitherto come before me as

beautiful, graceful, and attractive, she now appeared to me as a being of superior worth and significance. She was a double person ; her grace and loveliness belonged to me—that I felt as before—but the worth of her character, her self-confidence, her reliability in everything, that remained her own. I beheld it, I looked through it, and was pleased with it as with a capital, the interest of which I should enjoy for as long as I lived.

It has already long since been remarked with depth and significance that one does not stay long at the summit of fortune. The consent of both parents, quite peculiarly gained by Mlle Delf, was now recognised as in full force, though silently and without formality. For as soon as something ideal, such as a betrothal can really be called, enters into the actual world, as soon as we believe the thing to be quite settled, a crisis ensues. The outside world is quite merciless, and it has reason, for it must maintain itself at all costs ; the confidence of passion is great, but we often see it wrecked on the rocks of opposing actualities. Young married people who, especially in these latter times, enter into these conditions unprovided with sufficient means can promise themselves no honeymoon, the world immediately threatens them with irreconcilable demands, which, if not satisfied, make the young married couple appear absurd.

I had not before been aware of the insufficiency of means which I had got together anxiously for the attainment of my end, because up to a certain point they had been sufficient, but now these clearly would not be enough.

The fallacy which passion finds so convenient now presented itself in its fullest incongruity. My house and my domestic circumstances in all their details had to be considered with sobriety. The consciousness that the house would be adapted for a daughter-in-law was at the basis of the design, but then of what kind of a lady was one thinking ?

We have at the end of the third part made acquaintance with the gentle, loving, intelligent, beautiful, capable maiden, always like herself, affectionate and free from passion. She was the fitting keystone to the rounded arch which had already been built. But here, upon a calm, unbiassed consideration of the matter, one could not deny that in

order to establish the newly won in such a condition, a new arch would have to be built.

Meanwhile this was not quite clear to me, and to her just as little, when I thought of myself in my house, and imagined myself leading her into it, she did not seem to fit into it, just as I, when appearing in her circles, so as not to be in too great contrast with the men of fashion and the day, was obliged to change my dress from time to time. But this could not be done in the construction of a house where, in a newly built, stately citizen's house the spirit of a now old-fashioned pomp was dwelling.

And so even after the consent of the parents had been won, it was not possible to establish any relation, any family intercourse, between them. Different religious customs,<sup>1</sup> different manners ! and if the loved one wished in any way to continue her mode of life, she would find no opportunity, no room for it in that respectably large house.

If I had hitherto looked away from all this, fine prospects were opened from without for calming and strengthening me, so as to arrive at some position of profit. An active spirit gets a foothold everywhere ; capacities, talents, awake confidence ; every one thinks that a change of direction is all that is needed. The importunity of youth finds favour, genius is trusted for everything, though it can yet only do a certain amount.

The German intellectual and literary domain could at that time be regarded as but newly broken ground. Among the people of business there were clever men who wanted capable, cultivated, and skilful managers for the new ground which was being turned up. Even the respectable and well-founded Freemasons' lodge, with the most distinguished members of which I had become acquainted through my relation to Lili, knew how to make my neighbourhood available in a skilful manner ; but I, from a feeling of independence, which afterwards appeared to me madness, refused all closer connection, not perceiving that these men, though bound to one another in a higher sense, could help to advance my aims, which were so nearly related to theirs.

I return to the most personal matters. In cities like

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<sup>1</sup> The Schönemanns belonged to the Reformed, Goethe's family to the Lutheran Church.



Frankfort there are public appointments, residences, agencies, which by activity may be indefinitely extended. Something of this kind now presented itself to me, which, at first sight, seemed both advantageous and honourable. It was assumed that I would suit the place, and it would have been on the condition of the Chancery triad already described. We are silent about our doubts, we only communicate what is favourable ; by powerful activity we overcome all wavering ; therefore something untrue comes into our position without the force of passion being thereby lessened.

In times of peace there is no more delightful reading for the multitude than the public papers, which give us rapid information about the latest doings in the world. The quiet and secure citizen exercises then in an innocent way his party spirit, which we, in our limited circumstances, neither can nor should get rid of. Every comfortable person procures for himself an arbitrary interest, as in a wager, an unreal gain or loss, and, as in the theatre, takes a very lively though imaginary part in the good or bad fortune of others. This sympathy often seems arbitrary, yet it rests on moral grounds, for we soon give to praiseworthy intentions the applause they deserve ; again, carried away by brilliant success, we turn to those whose purposes we should have blamed. For all this, that time provided us with rich material.

Frederick II., resting on his power, seemed still constantly to weigh the fate of Europe and of the world ; Catharine, a great woman, who had shown herself worthy of the throne, gave great scope to capable, highly favoured men for continually extending the power of the Empress ; and since this happened with regard to the Turks, whom we are accustomed to repay richly for the contempt with which they look down upon us, it seemed as if no men were sacrificed when these infidels fell by the thousand. The burning<sup>1</sup> of the fleet in the harbour of Tschesme caused a universal festival of joy throughout the civilised world, and every one took part in the victorious arrogance when, in order to preserve a faithful image of that great event, in aid of an artistic study, a ship of war was blown up in the

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<sup>1</sup> In the War of Catharine of Russia against the Turks, 1771.

roadstead of Livorno. Not long afterwards a young Northern king,<sup>1</sup> also by his own power, seized the reins of government. The aristocrats whom he oppressed were not lamented, for aristocracy finds no favour with the public, since its nature is to work in silence, and it is the more secure the less it is talked about, and in this case they thought all the better of the young king, because, in order to place the higher ranks in equipoise, he had to favour the lower and bind them to himself.

But the world has a still more lively interest when a whole people had the appearance of freeing themselves. Already earlier one had looked at this spectacle on a small scale. Corsica had long been the point to which all eyes were directed. Paoli,<sup>2</sup> when he was no longer in a position to carry out his patriotic purpose, went through Germany to England, drew all hearts to himself; he was a fine, slender, light-complexioned man, full of grace and friendliness; I saw him in the house of Bethmann, where he stayed a short time, and met with cheerful friendliness the curious visitors who thronged to him. But now similar events were to be repeated in a more remote part of the globe; we wished the Americans all good fortune, and the names of Franklin and Washington began to shine and sparkle on the political and warlike horizon. Much had happened to improve the lot of mankind, and now, when a new well-meaning king of France<sup>3</sup> showed the best intention of himself doing away with so many abuses and limiting himself to the noblest ends, introducing a regular, efficient, political economy, of dispensing with all arbitrary power and of ruling by order as by right alone, the brightest hope spread over the whole world, and youth confidently thought that it dared promise itself and the whole race a fair, nay, a glorious future. In all these events, however, I took part only in so far as they interested society in general; I myself and my narrow circle did not busy ourselves with newspapers and the news of the day; we were concerned with getting to know man; we were ready to let men in general go their way.

The quiet condition of the German Fatherland, to

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<sup>1</sup> Gustavus III. of Sweden, 1772.

<sup>2</sup> Paoli (1726-1807) passed through Frankfort in 1769.

<sup>3</sup> Louis XVI. became king of France in 1774.

which my native city had adapted itself now for over a hundred years, had, in spite of many wars and convulsions, maintained its form completely. It was favourable to a certain general comfort, that from the highest to the lowest, from the emperor down to the Jew, the most varied gradation of all personalities, instead of separating them, seemed to bind them together. If kings were in a subordinate position to the emperor, yet their right of election and the privileges won and maintained for them thereby gave them a decided equilibrium. But now the high nobility were limited to the first royal circle, so that in view of their important prerogatives they could consider themselves of equal birth with the highest, indeed, in a certain sense, still higher, since the spiritual electors took precedence of all the others, and as offshoots of the hierarchy maintained an honourable and uncontested place.

If one thinks now of the extraordinary advantages which these old-established families have enjoyed, especially in foundations, orders of knighthood, ministries, unions, and brotherhoods, one will easily imagine that this great mass of important men, who felt themselves at the same time subordinated and co-ordinated, passed their days in the highest contentment and in a regulated activity, and without any special trouble prepared and transmitted an equal degree of comfort to their posterity. This class, too, was not lacking in intellectual culture ; already for a century past the high military and business training had been very prominent, and had taken possession of the whole noble as well as the diplomatic circle, but, at the same time, through literature and philosophy, it had won many minds and had managed to raise them to a lofty standpoint, which was not too favourable to the present state of things.

In Germany it had scarcely yet occurred to anyone to look with envy on that monstrous privileged class, or to grudge it its fortunate advantages in the world. The middle class, undisturbed, had devoted themselves to trade and science, and had, indeed, by these means as well as by technical power closely related to them, raised themselves to the position of an important counterpoise ; the free or half-free cities favoured this activity, while individuals felt a certain quiet satisfaction in it. Whoever saw his wealth increased, his intellectual activity, especially in matters of

law and affairs of state enhanced, could everywhere enjoy an important influence. If in the supreme courts of the empire, and also elsewhere a learned bench were placed opposite the bench of nobles, the freer oversight of the one could keep itself on friendly terms with the deeper insight of the others, and in their lives throughout there was no trace of rivalry. The nobility was secure in its unattainable prerogatives, which were sanctioned by time, and the ordinary citizen felt it beneath his dignity to strive for a semblance of them by the addition of a prefix to his name. The merchant and the mechanic had enough to do to keep pace in some degree with the rapid advancement of nations. If one does not regard the ordinary fluctuation of the day, we may certainly say that it was, on the whole, a time of pure striving, such as could not have appeared before, and which could not afterwards be long maintained on account of the outward and inward elevations that had occurred.

At this time my position towards the upper classes was very favourable. Though in "Werther" the unpleasantnesses which exist on the boundary line of two distinct positions were expressed with some impatience, this was allowed to pass on account of the general passionate character of the book, since every one felt that it here had no reference to any immediate action.

But through "Götz von Berlichingen" I was very well placed with regard to the upper classes; whatever wounds had been dealt to the proprieties of literature hitherto, here was represented, in a learned and capable manner, the old German constitution, the inviolable emperor at the head, with many other degrees, and a knight who, in conditions of general lawlessness, had decided to act as a private man, if not lawfully, at least uprightly, and in consequence fell into a very sorry condition. This complex story was not an invention, but was thoroughly bright and lively, and therefore here and there a little modern, but it was produced in the way in which the brave and capable man had described it in his own narrative, and with tolerable success.

The family still flourished. Its relation to the Frankish knighthood remained in all its integrity, although those relations, like many others of that time, may have become more faint and ineffectual.

Now all at once the little stream Jaxt and the citadel of

Jaxthausen acquired a poetical significance; they were visited as well as the Town Hall at Heilbronn.

One knew that I had in mind other points of that historical period, and many a family, which originated from that time, had the prospect of seeing its ancestors brought into the light of day in the same way.

A special general satisfaction arises when one brings again the history of a nation to its recollection in an intelligent manner; they enjoy the virtues of their ancestors and smile at their weaknesses, which they think they have long ago overcome. Sympathy and applause therefore cannot fail such a representation, and in this sense I had much to enjoy.

It is worth noticing, however, that among the numerous advances which were made to me in the multitude of young persons who attached themselves to me, there was found no nobleman; on the other hand, there were many already arrived at the age of thirty who sought me and visited me, and their willing and striving were pervaded by a joyful hope of seriously developing themselves in a patriotic and generally more humane manner.

At this time especially a lively interest was disclosed in the period between the fifteenth and sixteenth century. The works of Ulrich von Hutten came into my hands, and it seemed strange enough that something so similar to what then occurred should manifest itself here again in our later days. The following letter of Ulrich von Hutten<sup>1</sup> to Billibald Pirkheimer may here find a suitable place:—

“What fortune has given us it generally takes away again; and not only that, everything else which attaches to man from without we see is subjected to accident. But now I strive after honour which I should wish to obtain without envy, in whatever way; for a fiery thirst for fame possesses me, so that I wish as far as possible to be ennobled. It would not stand well with me, dear Billibald, if I should now hold myself for a nobleman, though I was born in this rank, this family, and of such ancestors, if I had not ennobled myself by my own exertion. So great a work have I in my mind! I am thinking of something higher! Not that I should see myself set in a more distinguished, a more brilliant

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<sup>1</sup> 1488-1523. \*This famous letter was written in 1518.

rank, but I would rather seek a source from which I may draw a peculiar nobility, and not be numbered among the factitious nobility, contented with what I have received from my ancestors, but I would have added to these goods something of my own, which may pass over from me to my posterity.

“Therefore in my studies and efforts I turn and strive in a way contrary to the opinions of those who consider all that actually exists enough; for to me nothing of that sort is enough, as I have already made known to you my ambitions in this matter. And so I confess that I do not envy those who, proceeding from the lowest ranks have advanced above my own position; and on this point I am by no means in agreement with men of my rank who are accustomed to insult persons of a lower rank who have raised themselves by their capacity. For with perfect right they are preferred to us, who have seized and taken into their possession the material of glory, which we have neglected, they may be sons of fullers or tanners, they have known how to obtain such things with more difficulty than we have. Not only is the ignorant man who envies him who distinguishes himself by knowledge a fool, but he is to be counted among the miserable, nay, the most miserable; and with this fault our nobility are especially diseased, because they look askint upon such accomplishments. For what, in God’s name, is it to envy him who possesses what we have neglected? Why have we not been diligent about the law? Why have we not learned this beautiful learning, this best of arts? These fullers, shoemakers, and wheelwrights have gone before us. Why have we forsaken our post, why have we left the most liberal studies to servants and (shamefully for us) their offscourings? Most justly has every skilled and diligent person been able to take into his possession and to make use of through his activity the inheritance of the nobility which we have despised. Wretched beings that we are who neglect that which is able to raise the humblest individual above us; let us then cease to envy and seek to obtain that which others arrogate to themselves to our infamous shame.

“Every longing for fame is honourable, all striving for what is excellent is praiseworthy. To every rank let its own honour remain, may its own ornament be allotted to it.

Those ancestral pictures I will not despise, any more than I would the richly endowed pedigrees ; but whatever may be their worth, it is not our own, unless we first make it ours by our merits, nor can it last unless the nobility adopt the manners which become them. In vain will a fat and corpulent head of a family show you the statues of his ancestors, while he himself, inactive, were rather to resemble a clod than those who have shone before him with their excellence.

“ So much have I wished to confide to you so fully and so sincerely of my ambition and nature.”

If not in such a continuous stream, yet had I to hear such excellent and powerful sentiments from my more distinguished friends and acquaintances, of which the results showed themselves in an honest activity. It had become an article of belief that one must earn for oneself a personal nobility, and if any rivalry appeared in those fine days it was from above downwards.

We others, on the contrary, had what we wished ; the free and approved use of the talents lent to us by Nature as far as could consist with our civic relationships.

For my native city had in this a very peculiar position, and one which has not been sufficiently considered. While the northern free imperial cities were based upon a widespread commerce, and the southern, going backwards as regards trade matters, stood based upon art and manufacture ; in Frankfort on the Main a certain complexity was to be noticed which appeared to be woven together out of trade, capital, real estate, and the passion for knowing and collecting.

The Lutheran confession dominated the Government, the old Gan-inheritance deriving its name from the house of Limburg ; the house of Fraunstein, originally only a club, in the commotions brought on by the lower classes, faithful to the side of intelligence ; the lawyer, the well-to-do, and the well disposed, no one was excluded from the magistracy ; even those mechanics who, at a critical time had held to the established order, were eligible for the Council if only they were stationary in their place. The other constitutional counterpoises, formal institutions, and whatever else attaches to such a constitution gave to many men a sphere of action, while trade and manufacture in

so favourable a locality were in no sense hindered from extending themselves.

The higher nobility worked for itself unenvied and almost unnoticed ; a second class approaching it must have already been more active, and resting upon ancient wealthy family foundations endeavoured to distinguish itself by legal and political learning.

The so-called Reformists, like the refugees in other places, constituted a distinguished class, and even when they drove out in fine equipages on Sundays to their service in Bockenheim, it was always a sort of triumph over the citizens' party, who are entitled to go to church on foot in good weather and in bad.

The Catholics were scarcely noticed ; but they also were conscious of the advantages which the other two confessions had appropriated to themselves.



## BOOK XVIII

COMING back to literary matters I must give prominence to a circumstance which had great influence on the German poetry of that epoch, and is specially to be noted because this influence has lasted in the whole course of our poetic art up to the present day, and cannot be lost even in the future.

The Germans from the most ancient times were accustomed to rhyme ; it brought with it this advantage that one could proceed in a very naïve manner and only had to count the syllables. With advancing culture one began more or less instinctively to pay attention to the sense and significance of the syllables ; this deserved praise which many poets knew how to appropriate to themselves. The rhyme showed the close of the poetical sentence, the smaller divisions were marked by shorter lines, and a naturally refined ear sought for variation and grace. But now all at once rhyme was taken away, without reflecting that it was not yet decided about the value of the syllables, indeed, that it was a difficult thing to decide. Klopstock took the lead. How he laboured and what he accomplished is well known. Every one felt the uncertainty of the thing ; they did not like to run risks, and, led on by a natural tendency they snatched at a poetic prose. Gessner's extremely lovely idylls opened an endless path. Klopstock wrote the dialogue of Hermann's battle in prose, as well as the "Death of Adam." Through the civic tragedies, as well as through the drama, a more lofty style, and one more full of feeling, gained possession of the theatre ; and, on the other hand, the five-foot iambic verse which, by the influence of the English had been spread among us, was bringing poetry down to prose.

But in general the demands for rhythm and rhyme could not be given up. Ramler, though in accordance with uncertain principles, strict with regard to his own things, could not avoid making this severity felt with regard to the

works of others. He transformed prose into verse, altered and improved the work of others, by which he earned little thanks and confused the matter still more. But those succeeded best who conformed to the traditional rhyme with a certain observation of the worth of syllables and, guided by natural taste, observed unexpressed and undetermined laws, as, for example, Wieland, who, although inimitable, for a long time served as a model for more moderate talents.

But in every case the practice remained uncertain, and there was no one, even of the best, who was not for the moment led astray, and so there arose the misfortune that the peculiarly talented period of our poetry produced little which one could call correct in its kind, for here also the time was stirring, exacting, and active, but not reflective and self-satisfying.

In order, however, to find ground for a poetic footing, to discover an element in which one could breathe freely, one had gone back some centuries to where serious talents had been brilliantly prominent out of a chaotic state of things, and therefore one made friends with the poetic art of those times ; the minnesingers lay too far from us, one would have had to study the language first, and that was not our business ; we wanted to live and not to learn.

Hans Sachs, the really masterly poet, lay nearest to us. A true talent, not indeed like those knights and courtiers, but a plain citizen, as we also boasted ourselves to be. A didactic realism spoke to us, and we made use of the easy rhythms of the readily recurring rhyme on many occasions. This manner seemed so suitable to the poetry of the day, and we needed it every hour.

If new important works, which required the attention and labour of a year or a whole life, were built upon such hazardous grounds, on occasions which were more or less trivial, one can imagine how mischievously at the same time other transient productions were formed ; for instance, the poetical epistles, parables, and invectives of all sorts with which we continued to make war within ourselves and to seek quarrels abroad.

Apart from what has been already printed, only a little survives ; it may be preserved somewhere. Short notices may reveal more clearly the origin and intention of thinking men. Those with deeper penetration, to whose sight things

may come in the future, will be disposed to remark that there was an honest effort at the basis of all such eccentricities. Sincere purpose strives with presumption, nature against what is traditional, talent against forms, genius with itself, power against weakness, undeveloped capacity against developed mediocrity, so that the whole proceeding can be looked upon as a skirmish which follows a declaration of war and announces a violent contest. For, strictly considered, the struggle in these fifty years is not yet fought out; it is continually going on, only in a higher region. On the guidance of an old German puppet-show play I had invented a mad piece of nonsense which was to bear the title of "Hanswurst's Hochzeit" ("The Clown's Wedding"). The scheme was as follows: The clown, a rich young farmer who was an orphan, has just come of age and wants to marry a rich maiden by the name of Ursel Blandine. His guardian, Kilian Brustfleck (Leather Apron), and her mother, Ursel, are highly pleased. Their plan of many years, their highest wishes were thereby attained and fulfilled at length. There is not the least hindrance, and the whole rests peculiarly on this, that the longing of the young people to possess each other is restrained by the arrangement for the wedding and the unavoidable formalities which prevail on such occasions. As prologue, there enters the inviter to the wedding, who proclaims his traditional banal speech, ending with these rhymes:—

" The wedding feast is at the house  
Of mine host of the 'Golden Louse.' "

To escape from the reproach of violating the unity of place, in the background of the theatre, the aforesaid tavern was to be seen glittering with its insignia, but so that it could be represented as if it turned on a pivot to all its four sides, to meet which the front scenes of the stage had to be suitably changed.

In the first act the front side of the house turned to the street with the golden insignia magnified, as it were, by a solar microscope<sup>1</sup>; in the second act the side was towards the garden of the house; the third towards a small wood;

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<sup>1</sup> Is essentially the same as the combination of lenses used in the magic lantern.

and the fourth towards a lake lying close by, from which it was prophesied that in future times the decorator would have little difficulty in carrying a surging of the waves over the whole stage right up to the prompter's box.

But through all this the peculiar interest of the piece is not yet expressed, for the main joke was carried even to madness, namely, that the whole *dramatis personæ* consisted of merely traditional German nicknames, by which the character of the individuals was at once expressed and their relation to one another given.

Since we may hope that this present piece may be read in good society, also indeed in respectable family circles, we need not, after the custom of every theatre bill, name our persons here in order, or produce the places in which they showed themselves most prominent, though in the simplest way bright, roguish, natural allusions and witty jests must have arisen. As a specimen we add one page, leaving it to our editors to judge of its admissibility.

Cousin (Scrub) Schult, by his relationship to the family, had the right to be invited to the feast ; no one had anything to say against it, for, though he was thoroughly useless in his life, yet he was there, and since he was there they could not suitably refuse him ; and on such a festival day they were not to remember that they had sometimes been dissatisfied with him.

With Mr (Knav) Schurke it was a more serious case ; he had been useful to the family, when it was useful to himself as well ; on the other hand, he had also damaged it, perhaps to his own advantage, perhaps also because he found it convenient. The more or less prudent ones voted for his admissibility ; the few who wanted to exclude him were outvoted.

But now there was a third person about whom it was more difficult to decide ; in society an orderly man, complaisant, agreeable, and useful in many ways not less than other people ; he had the simple failing that he could not hear his name mentioned, and as soon as he perceived it, he was transported momentarily into the fury of heroes—such as the Northmen call Berserker rage—threatened to kill every one right and left, and so, carried away, was partly hurt and partly hurt others, so thus the second act of the play took on through him a very confused ending.

Here was an occasion which could not be missed for chastising the piratical publisher Macklot. That is, he is to put up with his own Macklotur tribe, and when he is conscious of the preparations for the wedding, he cannot resist the impulse to act the parasite and to refresh his hungry stomach at other people's expense. He announces himself; Kilian Leather Apron examines his claims and must refuse him, for all the guests, it is understood, are well-known public characters to which the applicant can make no claim. Macklot does his best to show that he is as famous as any of them. But when Kilian Leather Apron, as a strict master of the ceremonies, will not let himself be moved, that nameless person who has recovered from his Berserker rage at the end of the second act, espouses the cause of his near relative, the book pirate, so expressly, that he is finally admitted among the other guests.

About this time the Counts Stolberg announced themselves; they were busy about a journey to Switzerland, and wished to pay us a visit. Through the earliest appearance of my talent in the "Göttingen Musenalmanach" I had entered freely into friendly relation with them and other young men whose characters and labours are sufficiently well known. At that time people had somewhat strange ideas of friendship and love. It was really the liveliness of youth, each opening himself to the others, and there came out a spirit full of talent but uncultivated. Such a relation to one another, which seemed like confidence, they took for love, for real attraction; I deceived myself in this as well as others, and have suffered for it for many years in more ways than one. There is still in existence a letter of Bürger's of that time from which it may be seen that there was no question of the moral æsthetic among these companions. Every one felt himself excited, and thought that he could henceforth act and make poetry.

The brothers arrived, Count Haugwitz with them. By me they were received with open heart and with friendly propriety. They lodged at the hotel, but were generally with us at table. The first lively meeting showed itself to be highly pleasing, but eccentricities soon manifested themselves.

A singular relationship was established for my mother. In her capable frank fashion she could at once carry herself

back into the Middle Ages to take the part of Aja with some Lombard or Byzantine princess. She was only known as Frau Aja,<sup>1</sup> and she pleased herself at the joke and entered the more into the fantasies of youth, as she believed she saw her own type in the housekeeper of "Götz von Berlichingen."

But this could not last long, for we had only dined together a few times when, after enjoying one bottle of wine after another, the poetic hatred of tyrants came out, and one showed a thirst for the blood of such ruffians. My father shook his head smiling, my mother had scarcely heard of a tyrant in her life, yet she remembered having seen depicted on copper-plate in "Gottfried's Chronicle" such monsters: King Cambyzes, who, in the presence of the father, triumphed at having hit the heart of his little son with an arrow; this still remained in her memory. To give a more cheerful turn to these and similar expressions which continually became more vehement, she betook herself to her cellar where large casks of the oldest wine lay carefully preserved. Nothing less was to be found there than the brands of 1706, 1719, 1726, and 1748, by herself tended and cared for, seldom broached except on solemnly important occasions.

While she set before us the richly coloured wine in the polished flagon, she exclaimed: "Here is the true tyrant's blood! Rejoice yourselves with this, but leave all murderous thoughts outside this house." "Yes, tyrant's blood indeed," I cried, "there is no greater tyrant than one whose heart's blood is here set before you. Refresh yourselves with it, but in moderation, for you must fear lest he subdue you by his spirit and good relish. The vine is the universal tyrant who ought to be rooted up, we should therefore choose and honour the holy Lycurgus, the Thracian; he set about the pious work with vigour, but, blinded and corrupted by the infatuating demon Bacchus, deserves to stand high among the number of martyrs.

"This vine stock is the very worst of tyrants, at once a hypocrite, flatterer, and robber. The first draughts of his blood are appetising, but one drop entices another after it incessantly: they follow one another like a necklace of pearls which one is afraid of pulling apart."

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<sup>1</sup> From the "Mother of the Four Children of Haimon."

If I should here come under the suspicion, as have the best historians, of substituting a fictitious speech for that conversation, I might express the wish that some shorthand writer could quickly have seized this peroration and handed it down to us. The idea would be found the same and the flow of speech perhaps more graceful and attractive. Above all, there is wanting to this present representation as a whole the diffuse eloquence and fullness of youth, which feels itself and knows not where its power and strength will carry it.

In a city like Frankfort one finds oneself in a singular position ; strangers continually crossing each other point to every region of the globe and awaken a desire for travelling. On many an occasion before this I had been inclined for movement, and just now, at the moment when it was a question of making the experiment whether I could renounce Lili, the invitation of the Stolbergs that I should accompany them to Switzerland was welcome. Favoured by the consent of my father, who was glad to see a journey in that direction, and advised me not to delay going over into Italy when it might be suitable, I decided to go at once, and soon all was packed. With some intimation, but without leave taking, I separated myself from Lili ; she had so grown into my heart that I did not think I could separate myself from her.

In a few hours I saw myself with my pleasant travelling companions in Darmstadt. Even at court we were not always to act with strict propriety ; here Count Haugwitz guided us and took the lead. He was the youngest of us, well formed, of a gentle, noble demeanour, soft, friendly features, an equable disposition, sympathetic, but with such discretion that compared with the others he seemed impassive. He had therefore to endure from them all kinds of satirical speeches and nicknames. This was allowed to pass so long as they believed they could show themselves as Nature's children, but when it was a question of propriety, and when one was compelled again, not unwillingly, to appear as Count, then he knew how to introduce and to smooth over everything, so that we came off, if not with the best, yet with tolerable repute. Meanwhile I spent some time with Merck, who, in his Mephistophelian manner, looked askint at my intended journey, and knew how to

describe my companions, who had also visited him with unsparing good sense. In his way he knew me thoroughly, my naïve, indomitable good nature was painful to him, my everlasting indifference, the live and let live, was hateful to him. "Your going with these fellows," he said, "is a foolish trick," and he described them accurately, but not quite justly. Throughout there was a want of good feeling, therefore I could believe that I saw beyond him, though I did not so much see beyond him as know how to value those spheres which lay outside his circle of vision.

"You will not stay long with them," that was the result of his conversations. And here I remember a remarkable word which he repeated to me later, and which I repeated to myself, and often found significant in life. "Thy striving, thy unswerving direction is," he said "to give a poetic form to the real; others seek to make real the so-called poetic, the imaginative, and nothing comes of that but stupid stuff. If one apprehends the enormous difference between these two modes of action, holds it fast and applies it, one has reached the solution of a thousand other things."

Unfortunately, before the company left Darmstadt, there was occasion again to verify Merck's opinion incontestably.

Among the madresses which arose from the idea that we must try to transport ourselves into a state of Nature, was that of bathing in public waters under the open sky, and our friends, after violating every propriety, could not omit this unseemliness also. Darmstadt, situated on a sandy plain, without running water, had yet a pond in the vicinity, of which I only heard on this occasion. The hot-blooded friends, who were continually heating themselves, sought refreshment in this pond; to see naked youths in the clear sunshine might well seem something strange in this region; on all sides it produces scandal. Merck's conclusions became more caustic, and I don't deny it, I hastened our departure.

Already on the way to Mannheim, in spite of general good and noble feelings, a certain difference of sentiment and conduct showed itself. Leopold Stolberg expressed with passion how he had been obliged to give up a heart-felt love relation with a beautiful English lady, and on that account had undertaken so long a journey. When we sympathisingly disclosed to him that such sensations were not strange to us, the unbounded feeling of youth broke out



in him ; with his passion, his sufferings, as well as the beauty and loveliness of his beloved, there was nothing in the world to be compared. If we wished by moderate speech to bring such assertions into equilibrium, as is proper among good companions, we only made the matter worse, and Count Haugwitz, as well as I, was inclined at last to let the subject drop. Having arrived at Mannheim we engaged pleasant rooms in a respectable hotel, and during the dessert of the first dinner, where the wine was not spared, Leopold challenged us to drink to the health of his fair one, which was done with a suitable uproar. After the glasses were emptied he cried out : “ But now out of such consecrated vessels no more drinking must be allowed ; a second health would be a profanation, therefore let us destroy these vessels ! ” and at once he threw his wineglass behind him against the wall. The rest of us followed, and I imagined then that Merck pulled me by the collar.

But youth takes with it this peculiarity from childhood, that it never bears a grudge against good companions, that an unrestrained good nature may indeed be unpleasantly affected but cannot be hurt.

After the glasses thus proclaimed angelic had increased our reckoning, consoled and cheerful we hastened to Carlsruhe in order confidently and free from care to enter a new circle.

We found Klopstock there, who still exercised with dignity his old moral dominion over the scholars who held him in such reverence, and to him I, too, gladly submitted myself, so that when invited to court with the others I might behave tolerably well as a novice. In a certain way, too, one was challenged to be both natural and serious. The reigning Margrave, highly honoured among the German rulers as one of their princely seniors, but especially on account of his excellent governmental aims, was glad to converse about political economy. Her ladyship the Margravine, active and skilled in the arts and various useful branches of knowledge, was pleased with graceful speeches to manifest a certain sympathy ; we, on the other hand, were duly grateful, but we could not at home leave uncriticised her miserable paper factory and her protection of the book-pirate Macklot.

For me the most important thing was that the young Duke of Saxe Weimar, with his noble bride, the Princess

Louise of Hesse-Darmstadt, was here to enter upon a formal matrimonial alliance, and for that reason President von Moser had already arrived, in order to make public such important relations, and to conclude them fully with Count Görtz, the Prince's governor. My conversations with both of these high personages were most agreeable, and they closed the farewell audience repeatedly with the assurance that they would both be very pleased to see me soon in Wiemar.

Some particular conversations with Klopstock, by the friendliness which he showed me, aroused in me frankness and confidence towards him. I communicated to him the latest scenes of "Faust," which he seemed to receive favourably, and spoke of them with praise to other persons, as I afterwards heard, a thing not usual with him, and wished to see the conclusion of the piece.

That uncultured conduct of ours, which in those days we called independent, was to some extent chastened in Carlsruhe, which is a decent, almost holy, spot ; I separated from my companions, while I made a *détour* to Emmendingen, where my brother-in-law was upper bailiff. I regarded this step for seeing my sister as a real trial. I knew that she lived unhappily, without being able to blame her, or her husband, or the circumstances. She was a peculiar creature, of whom it is difficult to speak ; we will endeavour to bring together here what can be imparted.

She was favoured by a fine form ; not so her features, which, though expressing goodness, intelligence, and sympathy clearly enough, were lacking in a certain regularity and grace. In addition to this, a high and strongly arched forehead, through the disagreeable fashion of brushing the hair from the face and fastening it back, made a certain unpleasant impression, though it gave the best testimony to her moral and intellectual faculties. I can imagine that if she, as was the modern fashion, had surrounded the upper part of her face with curls, clothed her temples and cheeks with smooth ringlets, she would have found herself more agreeable before the mirror, without the anxiety of displeasing others as much as herself. In addition to this there was the misfortune that her skin was seldom pure, an evil which, by some demoniacal fatality from her youth up, was most likely to appear on festal days, concerts, balls, and other similar festivities.

These misfortunes she had fought her way through one by one, while her other noble qualities grew even more and more prominent.

A firm and not easily moved character, a soul that sympathised and needed sympathy, an excellent mental culture, polite knowledge, as well as talents ; some languages, a clever pen, so that if she had been outwardly favoured she would have passed among the most sought-after women of her time.

Besides all this there is still one strange thing to disclose, in her nature there was not the slightest sensuality. She had grown up near me, and wished to continue and pass her life in this brotherly and sisterly harmony. We had been inseparable since my return from the university ; in the most intimate confidence we held our thoughts, feelings, and whims, and accidental impressions in common. When I went to Wetzlar the loneliness seemed to her unendurable ; my friend Schlosser, not unknown, and not unwelcome to the good child, stepped into my place. Unfortunately, the brotherly affection changed in him into a decided, and, in his strongly conscientious nature, perhaps a first passion. Here appeared, as we say, a very suitable and desirable partner, whom she, after having firmly rejected various significant proposals, but from insignificant men from whom she shrank, was at last persuaded, I may say, to accept.

I must sincerely confess that as I often indulged in fancies about her destiny, I did not like to think of her as the mistress of a family, but rather as an abbess or as the lady superior of a noble community. She was possessed of everything required by such a high station ; she lacked what the world regards as indispensable. Over feminine souls she always exercised an irresistible influence, she drew young minds lovingly towards her, and dominated them by the spirit of her inward excellencies. As she now shared with me my universal tolerance for the good and the human, with all its eccentricities, if they did not amount to perversity, there was no need that any idiosyncrasy, by which a strong nature was distinguished, should conceal itself before her or feel under any constraint in her presence ; hence our companionships, as we have seen before, were always varied, free, ingenuous, if sometimes bordering on boldness. My habit of respectful and intimate intercourse with young

ladies, without any limitation or sense of appropriation arising from it, was due to her alone. But now the perspicacious reader, who is capable of reading between the lines what does not stand written, but is indicated, can form an idea of the serious feelings with which I then betook myself to Emmendingen.

But at my departure, after a short stay, it lay still more heavily on my heart that my sister had most earnestly recommended, nay, commanded, my separation from Lili. She had suffered much from an irksome betrothal ; Schlosser to be sure, in his integrity, did not become engaged to her until he was certain of his appointment in the Grand Duchy of Baden, indeed, if one will so understand it, till he was actually appointed. The definite decision was delayed in an incredible manner. If I may disclose my conjecture in the matter, the excellent Schlosser, capable as he might have been in business, on account of his rugged honesty, was not desirable to the Prince as a promptly available servant, still less to the ministers as a near fellow-worker. The appointment he had expected and keenly desired in Carlsruhe did not come off. But this delay was explained to me. When the post of an upper bailiff in Emmendingen became vacant, they at once transferred him to it. There was handed over to him an office of dignity and profit for which he showed himself fully equal. It seemed quite suited to his mind and his mode of action to stand here alone, to act according to his conviction, and to give an account of everything whether he was praised or blamed.

There was no objection to be made to this, so my sister had to follow him, not indeed to a residence, as she had hoped, but to a place which must have seemed to her a solitude, a desert, to a dwelling, certainly spacious, official-looking, stately, but without anything sociable. Some young ladies, with whom she had cultivated an early friendship, followed after her, and as the Gerock family was blessed with daughters, these contrived to alternate, so that in the midst of so much privation she at least enjoyed one long trusted society.

It was these circumstances and these experiences which made her feel justified in enjoining upon me most earnestly a separation from Lili. It seemed to her hard to take a young lady, of whom she had formed the highest conception,

out of a very lively, if not brilliant existence, into our house, which, though admirable, was not adapted for distinguished society, between a well-meaning, taciturn, but very didactic father, and a mother extremely active in her domestic matters, who, after she had finished her business, did not want to be disturbed in any convenient piece of handiwork by a friendly converse with superfine and highly educated young persons.

On the other hand, she explained clearly and in a lively manner to me Lili's relations, for already, partly in letters but partly in passionate confidential talk, I had told her everything to a nicety.

Unfortunately her description was only a detailed and well-meant expression of what a gossiping friend, in whom, by degrees, one did not place much confidence, had taken the trouble to whisper to her with a few characteristic traits.

I could promise her nothing, but I was obliged to confess she had convinced me. I went on with the enigmatic feeling in my heart with which passion always nourishes itself, for Love, the child, clings obstinately to the garment of Hope, even when she takes the course of withdrawing with a vigorous stride.

The only thing which I still clearly remember between this place and Zürich is the falls of the Rhine at Schaffhausen. Here, by means of a mighty cascade, was indicated the first step into a mountainous country, which we were glad to enter, where step after step in ever-increasing ratio we had toilsomely to reach the heights.

The view of the lake of Zürich, which we enjoyed from the Swordgate, is still present before me ; I say from the gate of the inn, for I did not go inside, but hurried after Lavater. His reception was cheerful and hearty, and I must confess, exceedingly gracious ; no one could think of his presence except as confiding, considerate, benignant, and elevating. His wife, with somewhat strange, but serene, tender, and pious features, harmonised fully, like everything else about him, with his way of thinking and living.

Our first and almost uninterrupted subject of conversation was his theory of Physiognomy. The first part of this curious work was, if I mistake not, already completely printed, or at least near its completion. It might be called a superior kind of empiricism, methodical and universal.

I had the strangest relation to it. Lavater wanted all the world for co-operators and sympathisers ; he had already, on his travels on the Rhine, had the portraits taken of so many important men, in order by their personality to stir them to an interest in a work in which they were to appear. And so he proceeded with artists, he called on every one to send him drawings for his aims. They came, and were not precisely suited to their end. In like manner he had copper-plate engravings from everywhere, and this seldom turned out characteristic. A great labour was accomplished on his side ; with money and effort of every kind a significant work was got ready, all honour offered to Physiognomy, and as it was now to become a volume, the Physiognomy, based on a doctrine, verified by examples, was to approach the dignity of a science, it was found that no picture said what it ought to say, all the plates had to be censured or taken with conditions, not once praised, only tolerated, and many were quite effaced by explanations. For me, who always sought a foothold, before he went on, it was one of the most painful tasks which could be laid on my activity. Let the reader judge for himself. The manuscript with the interpolated stereotyped plates came to me at Frankfort. I had the right to erase everything which displeased me, to alter and put in what I liked, but of this I made very moderate use. One time only he had put in a certain passionate controversy against an unjust censor, which I set aside, and inserted instead a cheerful poem about Nature ; for this he scolded me, though afterwards, when he had cooled down, he approved of my procedure.

Whoever has perused the four volumes of the " Physiognomy " and (what he will not repent of) read them through, may consider what an interest our being together had, while most of the plates contained in it were already drawn and a part engraved, examined, and decided upon, and we considered the intellectual methods by which the unsuitable ones might be made instructive and even suitable.

If I again look through the work of Lavater it gives me a comic, cheerful sensation ; it is as if I saw before me the shadows of men well known to me at that time, over which I once worried myself, and over which I can now find little to take pleasure in. But the possibility of keeping together so much that was unmistakably depicted, lay in the fine and

decided talent of the sketcher and engraver Lips ; he was indeed born for the free prosaic representation of the actual, which here was particularly in question. He worked under the singularly exacting physiognomist, and had therefore to be on a careful look-out so as to approximate to the demands of his master ; the talented farm boy felt the whole obligation he was under to a clerical gentleman from a city of such high privileges, and took the best care of his business.

Living in a separate dwelling from my companions I became every day more of a stranger to them, without the least unpleasantness arising therefrom ; our land excursions were no longer made together, though in the city some intercourse was still kept up. They, too, had announced themselves at Lavater's with all the arrogance of youthful counts ; before the skilled physiognomist they certainly appeared somewhat differently to what they did to the rest of the world. He expressed himself to me about them, and I remember quite distinctly that in speaking of Leopold Stolberg, he exclaimed : " I don't know what you all would have ; he is a noble, excellent youth, full of talent, but they have described him to me as a hero, as a Hercules, and I have never in my life seen a more gentle and more tender young man, nor, if it comes to that, one more easily influenced. I am still far from any certain physiognomical insight, but as it seems to you and the multitude it is certainly confused enough."

Since Lavater's journey on the lower Rhine the interest in him and his physiognomical studies had very greatly increased : numerous visitors crowded upon him, so that he felt, in some degree, embarrassed at being looked upon and regarded as the first of spiritual and intellectual men who alone attracted strangers to him, he therefore, in order to get rid of all envy and ill will, knew how to remind and urge all those who visited him to treat other distinguished men in a friendly manner and with respect.

The aged Bodmer<sup>1</sup> was here specially regarded, and we had to visit him, and in our youthful fashion to revere him. He lived on a height over the larger or old city on the right

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<sup>1</sup> A Swiss poet, 1698-1783. He maintained the claims of imagination as against poetry with hard-and-fast rules.

bank, where the lake crowds its waters together as the Limmat ; this we crossed, and at last we climbed by even steeper paths the height behind the ramparts, where, between the fortifications and the old city wall, a suburb had charmingly formed itself with a half-country look, partly in continuous and partly in isolated houses. Here stood Bodmer's house, the abode of his whole life, in the freest and most cheerful surroundings, which we, in the beauty and clearness of the day, before we entered, had overlooked with the highest satisfaction.

We were conducted up one flight of stairs into a room panelled all round, where a lively old man of medium stature came to meet us. He received us with the usual greeting to youthful visitors ; we must reckon it as a kindness on his part that he, while passing away from this life delayed so long in order to receive us kindly, to get to know us, to rejoice in our talents, and to wish us happiness in our future career.

We, on the other hand, congratulated him that as a poet who belonged to the patriarchal world, and yet in the vicinity of the most cultivated city, he had possessed all through his life a truly idyllic dwelling, and, in the high free air, had enjoyed for such long years such a wide view with the constant satisfaction of his eyes.

It seemed not displeasing to him that we invited ourselves to take a survey from his window, and this truly, in the cheerful sunshine in the best season of the year, appeared quite incomparable. We looked over much of that which sloped from the great city to the water's edge, on the smaller city over the Limmat, as well as on the fertility of the Sihlfeld towards the west. Behind us, on the left, was part of the Lake of Zürich, with its shining rippled surface and its endless variety of alternating mountain and valley, shores, elevations, and changes not to be grasped by the eye, beyond which, dazzled by all this, one could see with deepest longing the blue ranges in the distance of the loftier mountain ridges, whose summits you could trust yourself to name.

The rapture of young men over the extraordinary beauty which had been about him daily for so many years seemed to please him ; he became, if one may so express it, ironically sympathetic, and we parted from him as the best of friends,



though a yearning for those blue mountain heights had gained the upper hand in our souls.

As I am now on the point of taking leave of our worthy patriarch, I notice that I have not yet said anything of his form and countenance, of his movements and manner of conducting himself. Above all, I do not find it suitable for travellers to describe a distinguished man whom they visit as if they wanted to give materials for a warrant of arrest. No one considers that it is only for a moment when introduced that one curiously observes him, and this only in one's own way, and so the person visited is seen now actually, now apparently, to be proud or meek, silent or talkative, cheerful or disagreeable. In this particular case I might excuse myself by saying that Bodmer's venerable person, described in words, would not make an equally favourable impression. Fortunately his picture exists by Count von Bause, which perfectly represents the man as he appeared to us, and indeed with his look of penetration and reflection.

A peculiar, not indeed unexpected, but highly desired, pleasure awaited me in Zürich, when I met my young friend Passavant in person. The son of a respectable protestant house in my native city, he lived in Switzerland at the fountain-head of that doctrine which he was afterwards to proclaim as preacher. With a figure not large but nimble, his face and whole being promised a pleasing, rapid power of decision. His hair and beard were black, his eyes vivid. On the whole he had a sympathetic but restrained energy.

Scarcely had we, embracing one another, exchanged the first greetings, when he immediately proposed to me to visit the little cantons which he had already rambled through with great delight, and with the sight of which he wished to excite my rapture and enthusiasm.

Whilst I had been talking over with Lavater the nearest and most important matters, and we had nearly exhausted our mutual business, my lively fellow-travellers had already gone off in various directions, and had looked about the country in their fashion. Passavant, encircling me with hearty friendship, believed that he had thus obtained a right to the exclusive possession of my society, and, in their absence, managed to entice me to the mountains, the more easily as I was decidedly inclined, with the greatest tranquillity and in my own way, to accomplish this long ramble.

We got into a boat, and on a brilliant morning we went up the glorious lake. A poem inserted here may bring some idea of those happy moments.

<sup>1</sup> " My blood flows fresh, my soul finds food,  
I roam the world at large,  
And Nature, smiles she not most good  
Who holds my heart in charge !

The wavelets lift our little boat  
With oars in measured beat,  
And hills, piled cloud like, hither float  
Our bounding bark to meet.

Eye, mine eye, why art thou sinking ?  
Of those dreams must still be thinking ?  
Go, Dream ! golden as thou art,  
Here, too, love and life have part.

Under the wave fly, blinking,  
Shoals of stars, as I ponder ;  
Flocks of clouds hang drinking  
Round the hills away yonder.

O'er the shadowy cove  
Morning wind is dancing  
From the lake come glancing  
Fruits, half-hid in the grove."

We landed in Richterschwyl, where we had an introduction from Lavater to Dr Hotze.<sup>2</sup> As a physician, as a highly intelligent and benevolent man, he enjoyed great esteem in his locality and in the whole country, and we cannot honour his memory better than if we refer to a passage in Lavater's " Physiognomy," which describes him.

After being most hospitably entertained, after the most pleasant and useful conversation about the next halting-places in our wandering, we climbed the mountains which lay behind. When we had to descend again into the valley of Schindellegi, we turned round once more so as to take

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<sup>1</sup> " Auf dem See."

<sup>2</sup> 1734-1811. A friend of Lavater and Pestalozzi.

into ourselves the ravishing view over the lake of Zürich. How I felt then the following lines indicate, as they were written down at the time and are still preserved in a memorandum book.

1 " If I, lovely Lili, had not loved thee,  
How I'd revel in a scene like this !  
And yet if I, Lili, did not love thee,  
Ah, what scene would yield me any bliss ? "

I find this little ejaculation more expressive here than as it stands printed in the collection of my poems.

The rough ways which led from there to St Mary's hermitage could not in the least impair our good spirits. A number of pilgrims, whom we had already noticed below on the lake, moving on regularly with prayers and song, had caught us up ; we greeted them as they passed, and, as they invited us to join them in their pious objects, animated these dreary heights with characteristic grace. We saw depicted in a lively manner the serpentine path which we had to travel, and we seemed to follow it more joyfully ; the customs of the Romish church are altogether significant and imposing to the Protestant, inasmuch as he only recognises the elemental, the inmost, by which they are called out, the human element by which they have been propagated from race to race, penetrating to the kernel, without being occupied for a moment with the shell, the rind, nor even with the tree itself, its twigs and leaves, bark and roots.

Now we saw in a desolate, treeless valley, the splendid church rise up before us, the monastery, of broad and stately extent, in the midst of a neat settlement, in a measure fit to receive a great and varied number of guests.

The little church within the church, the former hermitage of the saint, incrustured with marble and transformed as much as possible into a respectable chapel, was something new to me, I had seen nothing like this little vessel surrounded and built over with pillars and arches. It must arouse serious reflections that a single spark of morality and the fear of God should have kindled here a bright and ever-burning little flame, to which troops of believers should make a pilgrimage with great toil to light their little taper at the holy flame.

However this may be, it points to an unbounded craving of mankind for a like light and a like warmth, which the hermit had first cherished and enjoyed in the deepest feeling and the most assured conviction. They led us into the treasury, which, rich and imposing enough, offered to the astonished eye, busts of the size of life, and indeed, colossal, of saints and the founders of the order.

Yet the sight of a cupboard opening from this awakened quite a different sort of attention. It contained antique treasures here consecrated and revered. Various crowns of remarkable goldsmith's work riveted my gaze, among which one exclusively was regarded. It was a pointed crown in the style of ancient art, similar to what one may have seen on the heads of ancient queens, but of such tasteful design, of an execution so elaborate, even the coloured stones fitted in and distributed about, and set opposite to one another with such selection and skill, in short, a work of such a kind that at the first look one would pronounce it for perfect, without being able to develop this impression by the laws of Art.

In such cases, too, where the art is not recognised but felt, one's mind and soul are disposed to make use of it, one would like to possess the jewel to make pleasure for others with it.

I begged permission to take out the little crown, and, while holding it respectfully in my hand, I raised it on high, I could not help thinking that I must press it on the bright glittering locks of Lili, lead her before the mirror, and be conscious of her joy over herself and the happiness which she spread around her. I have often thought that this scene, if realised by a painter of talent, would give an impression full of meaning and sentiment. It would be worth while to be the young king who, in this way, should receive a bride and a new kingdom. To show us the possessions of the cloister completely they led us into a cabinet of natural and artificial curiosities. At that time I had but little notion of the worth of such things, nor had the study of the earth's surface yet fascinated me; praiseworthy as the study is, it is apt to pull to pieces the beautiful whole of Nature before the mind's eye; still less had a fantastic geology let me be lost in her labyrinths; the monk, however, who led us round obliged me to bestow some attention on a

fossil, much prized, as he said, by connoisseurs, the small head of a wild boar well preserved in a lump of blue shale, which, black as it was, has remained in my imagination ever since. It had been found in the neighbourhood of Rapperschwyl, which from earliest times was full of morasses, and could well receive and preserve such mummies for posterity.

But I was quite differently attracted by a copper-plate engraving, under frame and glass, of Martin Schön,<sup>1</sup> representing the departure of Mary. True, only a perfect copy can give us a conception of the art of such a master, but we were then so affected by it, as by the perfect in every art, that we cannot rid ourselves of the desire to possess the like, to be able to repeat the sight of it, however much time may have elapsed between. Why should I not anticipate and confess here that later I did not leave it until I succeeded in getting an excellent print of this plate.

On the 16th July 1775, for here I find the first date noted down, we entered upon a toilsome way, wild, stony heights had to be climbed over, and that in complete solitude and desolation. At a quarter before eight in the evening we stood opposite the Schwyzer-Haken, two mountain tops, which, near to one another, juttred out boldly into the air. We found snow upon our way for the first time, and on those jagged rocky peaks it had been hanging from the winter. A primæval pine-forest filled sternly and fearfully the immeasurable gorges into which we were to descend. After a short rest, with fresh and willing activity we sprang from cliff to cliff, from rock to rock, down the precipitous footpath, and arrived at Schwyz about ten o'clock. We had become at once weary and cheerful, weak and excited; we eagerly quenched our thirst, and felt still more enthusiastic. Picture to yourself the young man, who about two years before, had written "Werther," a younger friend who had already been inflamed by the manuscript of that remarkable work, both, without knowing or wishing it, transported in a certain way into a natural situation, vividly thinking of past passions, clinging to those of the present, forming fruitless plans, in the feeling of happy power, rioting through

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<sup>1</sup> Usually known as Schongauer (1445-91), the famous engraver who lived at Colmar.

the realm of fancy, you will then come near to an idea of our situation, which I should not know how to describe if it did not stand written in my diary : " Laughing and shouting lasted till midnight."

On the morning of the 17th, we saw the Schwyzer-Haken before our windows. On these huge irregular, natural pyramids, clouds on clouds ascended. At one in the afternoon we left Schwyz on our way to the Rigi, at two we were on the Lauerzer lake in glorious sunshine. For sheer delight we saw nothing. Two capable maidens guided the boat, that was graceful, and we allowed it to be so. We arrived upon the island where they say here lived formerly the robber baron ; however that may be, between the ruins the hut of the pilgrim has been inserted.

We climbed the Rigi ; at half-past seven we stood by the " Mother of God " in the snow, then in the chapel, passing by the cloisters, resting at the hotel of the " Ox."

On the 18th, Sunday morning, the chapel was sketched from the " Ox." At twelve we went to Kaltenbad, or the fountain of the " Three Sisters." At a quarter-past two we had climbed to the summit ; we found ourselves in clouds ; this time it was doubly unpleasant for us, as they hindered the view, and the mist as it came down wetted us. But when they opened out here and there and let us, surrounded by their wavering frame, see a clear, splendid sunlit world, like advancing and changing pictures, we no longer lamented these accidents, for it was a sight never seen before nor to be seen again, and we stayed long in this more or less uncomfortable position in order to catch a glimpse through the rifts and crevices of the ever-shifting balls of clouds of some little point of sunny earth, a small strip of shore, or a corner of the lake.

At eight in the evening we were again back before the door of the inn, and refreshed ourselves with baked fishes and eggs, and plenty of wine.

As it became twilight and the night drew on, mysterious and harmonious sounds filled our ears, the murmur of the chapel bells, the splashing of the fountain, the whistling of the changing breezes, the woodmen's horns in the distance, they were blessed, tranquillising, soothing moments. Early on the 19th, at half-past six, we first went up, then down the Lake of the Four Cantons to Vitznau ; from there by

water to Gersau ; at midday, at the hotel on the lake. About two o'clock we were opposite Görtli, where the three Tells took one oath here on the flat rock to which the hero sprang, and where, to his honour, the legend of his life and deeds is immortalised by painting. At three o'clock we were at Flüelen, where he embarked ; at four o'clock in Altdorf, where he shot the apple.

With these poetic threads one winds conveniently through the labyrinth of these rocky walls, which, descending abruptly to the water, have nothing to say to us. They, the immovable, stand there as quietly as the coulisses of a theatre ; happiness or unhappiness, joy or sorrow, are only destined for the persons who to-day are on the stage. Such reflections, however, were quite outside the circle of vision of those young men ; what had immediately passed away they had struck out from their thoughts, and the future lay before them as strangely inscrutable as the mountain region into which they were penetrating.

On the 20th, we came upon Armstäg, where they prepared for us baked fish, which was most palatable. Here now, on this sufficiently wild mountain outpost, where the Reuss pressed forward from the rugged cliffs and the fresh snow water was playing over the clear pebbly shores, I could not refrain from availing myself of the wished-for opportunity and refreshing myself in the foaming waves.

At three o'clock we went farther on, a row of pack-horses went in front of us, we marched with them over a broad mass of snow, and learnt for the first time afterwards that it was hollow underneath. Here the snow of winter was deposited in a mountain gorge, which otherwise we should have had to go round, and this now served as a direct and shorter way. The waters streaming through below had, by degrees, hollowed it out, through the mild summer air the vault had been melted away more and more, so that it now, like a broad arched bridge, held both sides together. We convinced ourselves of this marvellous natural phenomenon by venturing more than half-way into the broadest gorge.

As we kept ascending farther, the pine woods were left in the chasm, through which the foaming Reuss from time to time let itself appear over the rocky precipices.

At half-past seven we arrived at Wassen, where, in order to refresh ourselves with the heavy, red, sour Lombardy

wine, we had first to help ourselves with water, and supply with much sugar the ingredient which Nature had refused to elaborate in the grape. The landlord showed us some beautiful crystals, but I was at that time so removed from such studies of Nature that I would not once burden myself for a small price with these mountain products.

On the 21st, at half-past six, still upwards ; the rocks grew mightier and more terrible, the way to the Devil's Stone, to the view of the Devil's Bridge, ever more toilsome. My companion was here inclined to rest ; he stirred me to sketch the most important views. I might have succeeded with the outlines, but nothing seemed to stand out, nothing to fall back, for such objects I had no language. We had to go on farther, the monstrous wildness seemed always to increase, plains became mountainous, and hollows precipices. And so my guide led me to the hole of Ursern, through which I walked somewhat uncomfortably ; what one had seen so far was indeed sublime, but this the darkness took away altogether.

But the roguish guide had anticipated the joyous astonishment which was to surprise me on our exit. The stream, now foaming moderately, meandered gently here through a level valley surrounded by mountains, but yet wide enough and inviting one to dwell there. Above the clear little village of Ursern, and its church, which stood opposite to us on the level ground, rose a little pine wood, which was regarded as sacred, because it protected the hermits at its foot from the avalanches of snow which rolled down. The meadows of the valley beginning to be green were adorned here and there with short willows ; we were delighted with the vegetation which we had long missed. The tranquillity was great, upon the level paths our strength was again revived, and my fellow-traveller pleased himself not a little on the surprise which he had so skilfully introduced.

On the meadow was found the famous Ursern cheese, and the enthusiastic young men felt an ordinary wine to be quite excellent, in order to enhance still more their pleasure and to lend a more imaginative flight to their projects.

On the 22nd, at half-past three, we left our abode, so as from the smooth Ursern valley to enter the stony valley of Liviner. Here, too, we missed all fertility, bare, as well as mossy rocks covered with snow, fitful gusts of wind,



clouds blowing hither and thither, the noise of waterfalls, the tinkling of the beasts of burden in the greatest solitude, where one saw neither those coming nor those departing. Here it does not require much imagination to see nests of dragons in these clefts. But we felt ourselves cheered and uplifted by one of the most beautiful and most picturesque waterfalls, sublimely varied in all its gradations, which, just at this season of the year, being enriched by melted snow, half-hidden by the clouds, and half-revealed, riveted us to the spot for a considerable time.

At last we came to small lakes of mist, as I might term them, since they were scarcely to be distinguished from the atmospheric streaks. It was not long before a building loomed out of the vapour ; it was the hospice, and we felt great satisfaction at being able to shelter ourselves under its hospitable roof.

## BOOK XIX

ANNOUNCED by the low yelping of a little dog coming out to meet us, we were received in a friendly way by an elderly but vigorous woman. She apologised for the absence of the Father Superior, who had gone to Milan—was, however, expected back that evening—she then bestirred herself, without saying much, for our convenience and necessities. A warm spacious room received us ; bread, cheese, and quite drinkable wine was set before us, and an adequate supper promised. The surprises of the day were again appraised, and my friend was very much pleased with himself, because everything had succeeded so well, and a day was put behind us, the impression of which neither prose nor poetry could reproduce.

As the late twilight drew on, the fine-looking Father entered, greeted his guests with friendly and confiding dignity, and enjoined with few words all possible attention on the cook. As we could not withhold our astonishment that he wished to pass his life up here in such a complete wilderness, removed from all society, he assured us that he was never in lack of society, as we had come to give him pleasure by our visit. There was a mutual trade between Italy and Germany. This continual interchange of goods brought him into relation with the first mercantile houses. He often went down to Milan, less often to Lucerne, from which place, however, young people were often sent to him from the houses which had to look after the postal business on this route, who, up here on the boundary, had to become acquainted with the circumstances and events which concerned these conditions. Amid such varied talk the evening passed away, and we slept a quiet night on a somewhat short bedstead fastened to the wall, reminiscent of a book-rack rather than a bedstead.

Rising early, I soon found myself under the open sky, but in a narrow space surrounded by lofty mountain summits.

I sat down on the footpath which led to Italy, and drew, after the manner of amateurs, that which could not be drawn, and still less could make a picture—the nearest mountain tops, whose sides the melting snow let one see, with their white furrows and black ridges. Nevertheless, by that fruitless effort that picture has remained ineradicably in my memory. My companion came up to me good humouredly, and began: "What do you say of the story of our spiritual host yesterday evening? Have you not got the desire, as I have, of descending from the Dragon's Height into those ravishing regions below? Wandering through these hollows must be splendid and laborious, and when it opens on Bellinzona, what a pleasure that will be! The isles of the Lago Maggiore, by the words of the good Father, have again passed vividly into my soul. Since Keyster's travels we have heard and seen so much of them that I cannot resist the temptation."

"Don't you feel like that, too," he continued, "you are sitting exactly on the right spot; I stood here once and had not the courage to jump down. Do you go on without further ceremony; wait for me at Airolo; I will come afterward with the courier, after I have taken leave of the good Father and arranged everything."

"Such an improvised undertaking will not please me," I answered. "What's the use of so much considering?" cried he; "we have money enough to get to Milan, credit will be found by our fairs there—I am acquainted there with more than one mercantile friend." He became still more urgent: "Go," said I, "make all ready for the departure; we will then decide."

It seems to me that a man in such moments felt no resolution in him, but is rather ruled and determined by earlier impressions. Lombardy and Italy lay like quite a foreign land before me; Germany, as a well-known, beloved place, full of friendly views and, let me confess it, that which had so long enchained me and supported my existence, remained even now the most indispensable element, from whose limits I could not trust myself to step. A little golden heart, which I had received from her in the most beautiful hours, still hung by the same little piece of ribbon to which she had tied it, warmed with love, about my

neck. I seized it and kissed it ; a poem to which this gave rise may here, too, be inserted.<sup>1</sup>

2 "Remembrances of joys long passed away :  
Relic, from which as yet I cannot part ;  
Oh, hast thou power to lengthen love's short day ?  
Stronger thy chain than that which bound the heart ?

Lili, I fly, yet still thy fetters press me  
In distant valley or far lonely wood ;  
Still will a struggling sigh of pain confess thee,  
The mistress of my soul in every mood.

The bird may burst the silken chain which bound him,  
Flying to the green home which fits him best ;  
But oh ! he bears the prisoner's badge around him,  
Still by the piece about his neck distressed.  
He ne'er can breathe his free, wild notes again :  
They're stifled by the pressure of his chain."

I rose up quickly so as to come away from the steep place, and so that my friend, who came storming on with the pedlar-like courier, should not tear me down into the abyss with him. I, too, saluted the pious Father, and, without losing a word, turned to the path by which we had come. My friend followed me somewhat hesitatingly, and, in spite of his love and attachment to me, he remained some way behind for a long time, till at last that glorious waterfall brought us together again, kept us together, and what was once decided had at last to pass for good and wholesome.

Of our descent I will say nothing further, but that the snow bridge over which we had quietly passed a few days before, with a heavy-laden company, we found completely fallen in, and now, since we had to make a *détour* through the open space, we had to wonder at the colossal fragments of a natural architecture.

My friend could not quite get over his disappointment at not returning to Italy ; very likely he had thought it all out some time before, and with amiable cunning hoped

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<sup>1</sup> The day spent on the Gotthard was Lili's birthday, 23rd June.

<sup>2</sup> "An ein goldnes Herz, das er am Halse trug."

to surprise me on the spot. Therefore our return did not proceed so cheerfully, but I was all the more constantly occupied on my silent path in trying to fix, at least in its more comprehensible and characteristic particulars, the immense world which was to be gathered together in our minds with the lapse of time.

Not without many fresh as well as renewed feelings and thoughts did we arrive at Küssnacht through the remarkable heights of the Lake of the four Cantons, where we landed and pursued our wandering, greeting Tell's Chapel on the way, and reflecting on that assassination which is such a theme of patriotism and glory for the whole world. And so we went over the Lake of Zug, with which we had become acquainted in the distance, as we looked down from the Rigi. In Zug I only remember some painted panes of glass inserted into the window frame, not indeed large, but excellent in their way. Then our route led over the Albis into the Sihl Valley; we visited a young Hanoverian, Von Lindau, delighting himself in solitude, to mitigate the disappointment which he had felt some time before in Zürich, when I refused his company in not the most friendly and suitable way. The jealous friendship of the excellent Passavant was actually the cause of my declining a dear but yet inconvenient presence of another.

But before we descend from these glorious heights again, to the lake and to the city lying in so friendly a way, I must yet make a remark about my attempts to carry away something of the country by drawing and sketching. The habit from youth up of looking at the landscape as a picture, seduced me into the attempt, whenever I saw in Nature the country as a picture, to fix it, and wish to preserve it as a sure memorial of such moments. But having only practised myself on limited objects so far, I soon felt my insufficiency in such a world.

Hurry and bustle compelled me to a singular measure of help; I had scarcely seized an interesting object, and indicated it with a few strokes in a general way on the paper, when I noted down the detail which I could not attain to nor execute with the pencil in words, and gained by this means such an inward presence of such views that every locality as I afterwards might want to use it in poem or narrative floated at once before me and stood at my command.

On my return to Zürich I found the Stolbergs no more ; their stay in this city had been cut short in a wonderful way.

It must be confessed in the main that travellers who withdraw from the limitation of their homes think they step into not only a strange but a perfectly free nature, and this delusion we could at that time cherish the more as we were not yet reminded every moment by police examinations of passports, by tolls, and other such like hindrances, that abroad things are still more limited and worse than at home.

If you can imagine that unconditioned tendency to realise the freedom of nature, you will pardon the young spirits who looked upon Switzerland as precisely the place in which to idealise their fresh young nature. The tender poems of Gessner, as well as his most delightful sketches, had most decidedly justified this.

In reality, for such poetic expressions, bathing in wide waters seems to be one of the best qualifications. Already upon our journey such natural exercises had not seemed quite suitable to modern customs, and in some degree we had restrained ourselves from them. But in Switzerland, at the sight and cool feeling of a stream flowing, running, rushing, then gathering to a smooth surface and gradually spreading out to a lake, the temptation was not to be resisted. I will not deny that I joined myself with my companions in bathing in that clear lake, and, as it seemed, far enough from all human eyes. But naked bodies shine afar, and whoever may have seen us took offence.

The good, harmless youths, who found nothing shocking in seeing themselves half-naked like poetic shepherds, or entirely naked like heathen deities, were advised by friends to leave off such things. They were made to understand they were not living in primeval nature, but in a land where it was esteemed good and profitable to cling to the old institutions and customs coming down from the Middle Ages. They were not indisposed to recognise this, especially as the talk was of the Middle Ages, which seemed to them venerable as a second nature. They abandoned, therefore, the all too-public shores of the lake, and found in their walks through the mountains such clear, rushing refreshing waters, that in the middle of July it seemed to them impossible to

resist such a quickening influence, and so they came, in their widely extended walks, into the shady valley where the Sihl, streaming behind the Albis, shoots down so as to empty itself below Zürich into the Limmat. Remote from any dwelling, indeed from any trodden footpath, they found it here quite natural to throw off their clothes and boldly go to meet the foaming waves ; this indeed was not done without a shriek, nor without a wild shout of joy, excited partly by the chill and partly by the satisfaction by which we had the notion of consecrating those gloomy, wooded rocks to an idyllic scene.

But whether persons before ill-disposed to us had crept after us, or whether by this poetic tumult adversaries had been called forth, cannot be decided. Suffice it to say, we found stone after stone thrown down on us from the silent bushes above ; we were uncertain whether by few or by many, whether accidentally or intentionally, so we found it wisest to abandon the refreshing element and look for our clothes.

No one was hit ; surprise and annoyance were the mental injury we had sustained, and as lively young fellows we soon managed to shake off the recollection of this.

But the most disagreeable consequences extended to Lavater, because he had received, in a friendly way, young people of this audacity, had arranged walks with them, and otherwise favoured those whose wild unrestrained, unchristian, even heathenish nature caused so much scandal in a moral and well-regulated neighbourhood. Our spiritual friend, however, well understanding how to smooth over such occurrences, managed to quiet this down, and, after the departure of these meteoric travellers, everything on our return was restored to equilibrium.

In the fragment of "Werther's Travels," which has been lately reprinted in the sixteenth volume of my works (vol. vii., p. 98), I have endeavoured to describe this contrast of the Swiss commendable order and legal restraint with such a life of Nature demanded in the illusions of youth. But as all that the poet represents unconsciously is wont to be taken as if it were his decided opinion or didactic censure, so the Swiss were very much displeased by this, and I omitted the intended continuation, which, in some degree, was to have represented the progress of Werther up to the period when his sorrows are described and which,

therefore, would certainly have been welcome to those who know mankind.

Arrived at Zürich, I gave myself up to Lavater most of the time exclusively, whose hospitality I again claimed. The "Physiognomy," with all its portraits and deformities, weighed on the shoulders of the excellent man with an ever-increasing burden. We arranged everything in the circumstances as well as could be done, and I promised him on my return my continued sympathy.

I was led to this by my youthful absolute confidence in a rapid power of comprehension, still more by the feeling of a ready flexibility, for really, the manner in which Lavater dissected physiognomies was not in my line. The impression which the man made on me at our first meeting determined in some measure my relation to him, though the general kindness which actuated me, accompanying the light-heartedness of youth, always prevailed with me, and caused me to see objects in a certain twilight atmosphere.

Lavater's spirit was altogether imposing; in his neighbourhood one could not resist his decided influence, and so I had to submit to observing in detail, forehead and nose, eyes and mouth, and to weighing their proportions and relations. That prophet did this of necessity, so as to give a complete account of what he so clearly saw, but to me it always seemed like a trick, a piece of espionage, as if one wanted to analyse a man in his presence into his elements, and thereby come upon the trace of his moral peculiarities. I rather kept to his conversation, in which he revealed himself as he pleased. Accordingly, I will not deny that in Lavater's presence there was, in some degree, a feeling of uneasiness, for while he took possession of our peculiarities in the way of physiognomy, he was, in conversation, the master of our thoughts, which, in the exchange of talk, he could easily divine with some sagacity.

He who feels within himself a pregnant synthesis has peculiarly the right to analyse, since on outward details he proves and legitimises his inward conception of the whole. How Lavater conducted himself in this a single example will show.

On Sundays, after the sermon as a clergyman, he had the duty of holding the short-handled velvet box before each one who went out, and of receiving the alms with a blessing.



Now, on Sunday, he proposed to himself, for example, to see no one, but only to observe their hands and interpret to himself their forms. But not only the form of the fingers, but also the manner of the same in putting down the gift did not escape his attention, and he had much to reveal to me about it. How instructive and exciting must such conversations be to me, who was also on the way to qualify myself as a painter of men !

Many times in my after life I had occasion to think about this man, who is among the most excellent with whom I attained to so intimate a relation. And so the subjoined remarks about him were written at various times. In accordance with our divergent tendencies we gradually became strangers to each other, and yet I would not suffer my conception of his excellent nature to be impaired. I often brought him before my mind, and so these papers arose quite independently of one another, in which there maybe found some repetition, but, it is to be hoped, no contradiction.

Lavater had a decidedly realistic mind, and knew nothing ideal except under the moral form ; when one has firmly got hold of this idea one will most readily explain this rare and singular man.

His " Prospects of Eternity " are really only continuations of the present existence, under easier conditions, than those which we have to endure here. His " Physiognomy " rests on the conviction that the sensible presence corresponds throughout with the spiritual, is not only a witness of it, but is even its representative.

He could not be favourable to art-ideals, because he, with his keen look, saw only too well the impossibility of such natures being living organisms, and therefore he banished them into the realms of the fabulous or even the monstrous. His incessant inclination to wish to make the ideal real brought him the reputation of a visionary, though he felt convinced that no one laid more stress upon the actual than he did, and therefore he never could detect the error in his way of thinking and acting.

Seldom has anyone striven more passionately than he did to be recognised, and therefore he was pre-eminently fitted for a teacher, but if all his labour tended to the intellectual and moral improvement of others, this was not the ultimate aim for which he worked.

To realise the character of Christ was what he had most at heart ; hence his almost insane zeal to have one picture of Christ after another drawn, copied, imitated, none of which, as was natural, would satisfy him.

His writings even now are hard to understand, for it is not easy for anyone to penetrate into what he actually means. No one has written so much as he from the times and for the times ; his writings are veritable journals which require special explanation from the history of the time ; they are written in the language of a coterie, which one must know so as to be just towards them, otherwise much will appear to the intelligent reader quite mad and in bad taste ; and, indeed, enough objections were made against the man both in his life and afterwards.

For example, we had made his head so warm with our dramatising, as we represented everything that came before us under this form, and did not wish to have any other, that he was stirred up by it to labour with zeal in his " Pontius Pilate " to show that there is no more dramatic work than the Bible, and especially the story of Christ's Passion is to be regarded as the drama of all dramas. In this chapter of the little book, and indeed in the whole work, Lavater appears very much like the Father Abraham-a-Santa-Clara,<sup>1</sup> for into this manner must every intellectual man fall who wants to work upon the present. He has to inform himself about present tendencies, passions, speech, and terminology, so as to use them for his ends, and to approach the mass whom he would draw to him.

Since he understood Christ literally as the Scriptures, and as many commentators give him, this representation served so much for the supplement of his own being that he ideally incorporated the God-man into his own individual humanity until he could imagine himself melted into one with him, united with him, indeed, to be the same person. Through this decidedly literal faith he must also have gained a perfect conviction that miracles can be wrought still to-day as at that time, and as he had been earlier completely successful in some important and trying emergencies, by intense, indeed violent prayer, in procuring in a moment a favourable turn in matters that were seriously

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<sup>1</sup> The monastic name of Ulrich Megerte, an eccentric but popular German preacher, 1644-1709.

threatening, he could not be made in the least to have doubts by any cold objection of the understanding. Penetrated, moreover, by the great worth of a humanity restored through Christ and destined to a blissful immortality, but, at the same time, acquainted with the manifold necessities of the spirit and the heart, with the boundless yearning for knowledge, himself feeling that desire of expanding himself into the infinite, to which the starry heaven even sensibly invites us, he projected his "Prospects of Eternity," which, to the greatest part of his contemporaries, must have seemed a most strange book.

All this striving, however, all wishes, and all undertakings were outweighed by the genius for physiognomy which nature had apportioned to him. For, as the touchstone, by the blackening and peculiar smoking of its smooth surface, is best adapted to show the difference of the metals with which it is touched, so he, by the pure conception of humanity which he carried within himself and through his sharp yet sensitive gift of observation, which he exercised at first from natural impulse, only occasionally and accidentally, then with reflection, purposely and in a regular way, was in the highest degree qualified to be conscious of the peculiarities of individual men: to know them, to distinguish and express them.

Every talent which is based on a decided natural gift seems to us to have something magical about it, because we cannot subject it or its operations to an intellectual conception. And, actually, Lavater's insight into particular men surpassed every conception; one was astounded to hear him when we conversed confidentially of this or that person, nay, it was alarming to live near a man to whom every limit seemed clear within which Nature had been pleased to confine us individuals. Every one thinks that what he himself possesses can be communicated to others; and so Lavater did not want to make use of this great gift for himself alone, but it was to be found and called forth in others, it was even to be carried over to the multitude. To what obscure and malicious misunderstandings, to what stupid jest and low railleries this striking doctrine furnished rich occasion is still in the memory of some men, and it happened not entirely without the fault of the excellent man himself. For though the unity of his inner being rested on

a high morality, yet he could not, with his manifold strivings, attain to outer unity, because in him there was neither basis for philosophical method nor for artistic talent.

He was neither thinker nor poet ; not even an orator in the proper sense of the term. In no way in a condition to apprehend anything methodically, he seized securely on the individual things and set them boldly near one another ; his great physiognomical work is a striking example and testimony of this. Doubtless in himself the conception of the moral and the sensual man might form a whole ; but outside himself he did not know how to represent this idea, except practically in individual cases, as he had comprehended the individual in life.

Even that work shows, to our regret, how so sagacious a man gropes around in the commonest experience, summons every living artist and dabbler, expends an incredible sum of money for drawings and engravings without any character, so as to say in his book after each one that this or that plate was more or less a failure, unimportant, and useless.

Certainly in this way he sharpened his judgment and the judgment of others, but it also shows that his inclination urged him rather to amass experiences than to illuminate himself with them. And therefore he never could come to results, for which I often pressed him ; what he imparted confidentially as such to friends later on were none for me, since they consisted of a collection of certain lines and features, nay, warts and freckles, with which he had seen united moral and frequently immoral peculiarities. There were some remarks which horrified you, but it formed no series, one thing followed another accidentally ; there was nowhere a leading onward or referring back to be found. Just as little did any literary method or artistic sense reign in his other writings, which constantly contained a passionate and vehement exposition of his thinking and purpose, and supplied always by the most affecting and witty particulars what they could not accomplish as a whole.

The following reflections, also with reference to these circumstances, are here inserted in their right place.

No one willingly concedes an excellence to another, so long as he can in any way deny it. Natural gifts of every kind are least to be denied, and yet the common way of talking at that time ascribed genius to the poet alone. But

now all at once another world seemed to arise ; genius was demanded of the physician, of the general, of the statesman, and soon of all men who thought to distinguish themselves in theory or practice. Zimmermann especially had expressed this demand. Lavater in his " Physiognomy " was necessarily obliged to allude to a more general distribution of intellectual gifts of all kinds ; the word genius became a watchword, and because one so often heard it uttered, one thought that what it signified was constantly at hand. But since now every one was justified in demanding genius from others, he finally believed that he, too, must possess it himself. It was still a long time off<sup>1</sup> till it could be declared that genius is that power of man which, by deed and action, gives laws and rules ; in those days it was manifested only when it overstepped existing laws, overthrew established rules, and declared itself beyond all restrictions. Therefore, it was an easy thing to be a genius, and nothing more natural than that the abuse in word and deed should summon all orderly men to oppose such a monster.

When anyone went about the world on foot, without exactly knowing why or whither, he was said to be on a journey of genius, and if anyone undertook an absurd thing without aim or use, this was called a stroke of genius. Young men, lively and often really gifted, lost themselves in the limitless ; older men of understanding, but perhaps lacking in talent and soul, managed with most malicious joy to show up as ridiculous manifold miscarriages before the eyes of the public. And so I found myself almost more hindered in my self-development and self-expression by the false co-operation and influence of the like-minded than by the opposition of those whose mental temper was antagonistic to my own. Words, epithets, phrases in disparagement of the highest intellectual gifts spread themselves among the stupid imitative multitude, so that even now you hear them in common life here and there from uncultivated persons ; indeed they have even forced their way into the dictionaries, and the word genius has suffered such a misrepresentation that one is almost led to the necessity of banishing it entirely from the German language.

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<sup>1</sup> This refers to Kant's " Critic of the Judgment," which appeared in 1790, where the sentence occurs, " Genius is the talent which gives the rule to art."

And so the Germans, with whom that which is common finds the opportunity of getting the upper hand far more than with other nations, would have destroyed the fairest flower of speech, the word which, though apparently foreign, belongs to every people, had not the sense for what is highest and best, newly based by means of a deeper philosophy, been happily restored.

In the foregoing there has been mention of the youthful time of two men<sup>1</sup> whose memory will never be lost from the history of German literature and manners. At the period mentioned, however, we came to know them to a certain extent only from their errors to which they were misled by a false maxim of the day among their contemporaries of the same age. But there is nothing now more suitable than that we should bring forward their natural form and peculiar individuality duly valued and honoured, just as it then appeared in the immediate presence of the penetrating Lavater; therefore, since the heavy and expensive volumes of the great work of "Physiognomy" are probably accessible to only few of our readers, the remarkable passages, which refer to both, I have no hesitation in inserting from the second part of the work and its thirtieth fragment, page 244.

"The young men, whose portraits and silhouettes we here have before us, are the first men who ever sat and stood to me as one would sit to a painter for physiognomical description."

"I knew them before, the noble ones, and I made the first attempt according to nature and with all my former knowledge to observe and to describe their character.

"Here is the description of the whole man."

*"First of the Younger."*

"Behold the blooming youth of twenty-five! The lightly floating, buoyant, elastic creature! It does not lie, it does not stand, it does not lean, it does not fly; it floats or swims. Too much alive to rest; too supple to stand still; too heavy and too weak to fly."

"A floating thing, then, which does not touch the earth.

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<sup>1</sup> The two brothers Stolberg.

In its whole outline not a single loose line, but also no straight one, none that is stretched, none that is firmly vaulted, stiffly bent ; no angular indentation, no rocky promontory of the brow, no hardness, no stiffness, no angry roughness, no threatening ascendancy, no iron will—elastic and sensitive—but nothing iron, no steadfast and profound inquiry, no slow reflection, or clever deliberation, nowhere the reasoner with the scales held firmly in one hand and the sword in the other ; and yet not the least stiffness in look and judgment ; and yet the most perfect straightforwardness of understanding, or rather the most unstained feeling for truth. Always one with inward feeling, never the deep thinker, never the deceiver, developing by proof the truth so quickly seen, quickly known, so quickly loved and quickly grasped. Perpetual floater, seer, idealiser, beautifier. Former of all his ideas ! Even the half-drunk poet who sees what he will see ; not the sorrowful languishing, not the strongly crushing, but the lofty, noble, powerful, who, with moderate thirst for the sun, hovers to and fro in the regions of the air, strives aloft, and again sinks not to earth, but plunges to earth, bathes in the floods of ‘ rock streams ’ and cradles himself ‘ in the thunder of the rocks echoing around.’ His glance, not the fire glance of the eagle ! His brow and nose, not the courage of the lion ! His breast, not the steadfastness of the steed neighing for battle ! But on the whole much of the swaying suppleness of the elephant.

“The drawing up of his projecting upper lip towards the overhanging nose, not sharply cut, not angular, shows with the closeness of the mouth much taste and fine sensibility ; the lower part of the face much sensuality, indolence, and heedlessness. The whole outline of the profile shows openness, honesty, humanity, but, at the same time, a liability to be led astray, and a high degree of good-natured thoughtlessness which damages no one but himself. The middle line of the mouth in its repose indicates a downright planless, weakly constituted good being ; when in motion, a tender, fine feeling, extremely sensitive, benevolent, noble man. In the arch of the eyelids and the glance of the eyes there sits not Homer, but the deepest, most inward, most quick feeling, and understanding of Homer ; not the epic but the lyric poet ; genius which wells up, creates, glorifies,

moulds, hovers, charms all into the heroic form and defies all. The half-closed eyelids from such an arch rather indicate the finely feeling poet than the slowly toiling artist working after a plan, rather the amorous than the severe. The full face of the youth is much more taking and attractive than the somewhat too loose, too prolonged profile, the fore part of the face tells in its slightest motion of a sensitive, careful, inventive, unlearned inward goodness, and of a softly trembling liberty, which abhors wrong, a thirsting sense of life. It cannot conceal the slightest impression from the many which it receives at once and uninterruptedly. Every object which has a near relation to him drives the blood into his cheeks and nose, the most maidenly blush of shame in the point of honour spreads like lightening over the delicate moving skin.

“The complexion is not one of the pale, all-creating, all-consuming genius, not the widely glowing one of the contemptuous destroyer, not the milk white one of the stupid, not the yellow one of the hard and tough, not the brownish one of the slowly diligent worker, but the white and red, the violet, so expressive and so unchangeable, so happily mixed like the strength and weakness of the whole character. The soul of the whole and of each particular feature is freedom in elastic activity, which easily pushes forward and is easily pushed back. Magnanimity and sincere cheerfulness radiate out of the whole front face and the posture of the head. Incorruptibility of feeling, delicacy of taste, purity of mind, goodness and nobility of soul, active power, feeling of strength and weakness appear so transparently through the whole face, that what was otherwise a lively selfconsciousness melts into a noble modesty, and the natural pride and youthful conceit, without constraint or art, breaks in loving fashion into the playful majesty of the universal. The whitish hair, the length and awkwardness of the form, the softness and lightness of the step, the hovering gait, the flatness of the chest, the white, unwrinkled brow, and various other expressions spread over the whole man a certain femininity, by which the inward elasticity was moderated, and every intentional offence and meanness made for ever impossible to the heart, but at the same time it was also clear that the spirited and fiery poet, with all his unaffected thirst for freedom and setting free, is not destined to be a



thorough, persistent business man, who stands firm for himself, and puts through his plans, or to become immortal in the bloody strife. And now for the first time in centuries I notice that I have yet said nothing of the most striking thing, nothing of the noble simplicity, free from all affectation, nothing of the childlikeness of the heart, nothing of ~~the~~ entire unconsciousness of his outward nobility. nothing of the inexpressible bonhomie with which he accepts and endures warning and censure, even reproaches and injustice.

“But who will find an end of telling all that he has seen and felt in a good man, in whom there is so much pure humanity.”

*“Description of the Older*

“What I have said of the younger brother, how much also may be said of this one. The most prominent thing which I can notice is this. This figure and this character are more compact and less extended than the former one. There all was longer and flatter, here all is shorter, more broadly arched and bowed; there all was more vague, here more defined. So the brow, so the nose, so the chest, more pressed together, more active, less expanded, more power and life working to one aim—apart from these, the same amiability and bonhomie! Not that striking openness, more subtlety, but at bottom, or rather in deed, the more sense of honour. The same invincible abhorrence of injustice and wickedness, the same irreconcilability with all which can be called cunning and artifice, the same inexorableness towards tyranny and despotism; the same pure, incorruptible feeling for all that is noble, good, and great, the same need of friendship and freedom, the same sensibility and noble thirst for fame; the same catholicity of heart for all noble, good, wise, simple, powerful men, renowned or unrenowned, known or misunderstood, and the same light-hearted heedlessness—no, not exactly the same! The face is sharper, more contracted, firmer, has more inward, self-developing capacity for business and practical counsels, more enterprising spirit, which shows itself especially in the strongly prominent, bluntly rounded bones of the eyes. Not the welling up, rich, pure, lofty feeling of the poet, not the rapid ease of the productive

power of the other. But yet, and that in more profound regions, living just and inward. Not the airy genius of light, floating away in the morning red of heaven, and forming shapes there—more inward power, perhaps less expression, more powerful and terrible, less elegant and round, though neither colouring nor enchantment are wanting to his pencil. More wit and wild humour, droll satyr, forehead, nose, look ; all so downward, so overhanging, decisively right for original and all-enlivening wit, which does not gather from without, but flings forth from within. Above all, in this character everything is more prominent, angular, more aggressive, more storming. No insipidity, no relaxation, except in the sinking eyes, where pleasure as well in the brow and nose spring forth. Otherwise, in the very brow, this compendium of all, even this look, there is the infallible expression of unlearned greatness, the strength and impetuosity of humanity, constancy, simplicity, precision.”

After I had been obliged to allow Merck his triumph in Darmstadt, in that he had predicted my speedy separation from the gay company, I found myself again in Frankfurt, well received by every one, and even by my father, though he let me observe his disapproval at my not having gone on to Airolo, and announced to him my arrival in Milan, not expressly but in silence ; in particular he showed not the least sympathy with those wild rocks, lakes of mist, and dragon’s nests. Not by way of opposition but incidentally, he let me understand what it was all worth ; he who had not seen Naples had not lived.

I did not and could not avoid seeing Lili ; there was a tender and restrained relation between us. I was informed that in my absence they had fully convinced her that she must separate from me, and this was the more necessary and practicable since I had sufficiently declared myself by my journey and quite voluntary absence. The same places, however, in town and country, the same persons who were intimate with all the past could scarcely leave the two who were still lovers without emotion, though drawn apart from one another in a miraculous manner. It was an accursed condition, which in a certain sense resembled Hades, in the meeting of the happy and unhappy dead.

There were moments when the departed days seemed to be

revived again, but they vanished quickly like ghosts in summer lightning. Friendly persons had confided to me that Lili, when all the obstacles to our union had been laid before her, had declared that from her affection for me she undertook to give up all her present position and relations and go with me to America. At that time, perhaps more than at present, America was the El Dorado of those who found themselves oppressed in their conditions at the moment.

But the very thing which should have animated my hopes pressed them down. The fine house of my father, only a few hundred steps from hers, was certainly a more tolerable and more attractive situation than a distant and uncertain environment beyond the sea ; yet I do not deny that in her presence all hopes, all wishes came forward again, and new uncertainties stirred within me.

Indeed, the injunctions of my sister were very prohibitive and definite ; she had, with all the intelligent feeling of which she was capable, explained to me the situation of things, but her truly painfully cogent letters always followed up the same text, carrying it out more powerfully. " Good," said she, " if you could not avoid it, then you must put up with it ; such things one must suffer but not choose." Some months passed away in this most miserable of all conditions, all circumstances had conspired against this union ; in her alone I thought I knew there lay a power which might have overcome all.

Both the lovers, conscious of their position, avoided meeting each other alone, but in the customary way they could not help seeing each other in society. This was the strangest trial laid upon me, as every nobly feeling soul will agree when I explain myself more clearly.

Let us confess, in general, that in a new acquaintance, in the formation of a new affection, the lover is glad to draw a veil over the past. The affection troubles itself about no antecedents, and as it stands out with lightning swiftness it knows neither of the past nor future. It is true that my closer intimacy with Lili was introduced by her telling me of her early youth, how, from a child, she had excited many an affection and attachment, especially in strangers visiting her lively house, and she had found pleasure in them, though without any further consequences or union.

Truly, lovers consider all that they have felt before only

as a preparation for their present happiness, only as the basis on which the structure of their life is to be reared. Past affections seem like spectres of the night, which glide away before the break of day.

But what happened ! The fair came on, and so appeared the whole swarm of those spectres in their actuality ; all the mercantile friends of the important house came one by one, and it was soon revealed that not one of them was willing or could wholly give up a certain claim to the lovely daughter. The younger ones, without being impertinent, still appeared as well-known friends ; the middle aged, with a certain obliging dignity as those who made themselves beloved, and who, in any case, could come forward with higher claims. There were fine men among them with the comfort of a substantial position in the world.

But now the old men were quite insupportable with their avuncular manners, who could not keep their hands in restraint and in their disagreeable twaddle even demanded a kiss, for which the cheek was not refused. It was so natural to her decorously to satisfy them all. But the conversation, too, awakened many a thoughtful recollection. One spoke of those pleasure parties by water and by land, of the many incidents with a cheerful ending, of balls and evening promenades, of the laughing at ridiculous wooers, and whatever could excite a jealous anger in the heart of the inconsolable lover, who had torn away for himself the advantage of so many years to come. But amid all this throng, in this turmoil, she did not neglect her friend, and when she turned to him she knew with a few words to express the tenderest things which seemed perfectly adapted to their mutual condition.

Now let us turn from this torture, which is still in memory almost unendurable, to poetry, by which some intellectual and heartfelt alleviation was introduced into my condition.

“Lili’s Park” belongs to about this period ; I do not add the poem here, because it does not express that tender sensitive state of things, but only endeavours with genial vehemence to elevate the disagreeable and, by images which are comically provoking, to transform renunciation into despair.

The following song expresses rather the grace of that misfortune, and on that account is here inserted :—

“ Ye are fading, ye sweet roses,  
 From my love ye never sprang ;  
 Bloom to him who all hope loses,  
 And whose soul with grief is wrung !

I these days remember weeping,  
 Angel ! When I clung to thee ;  
 Early to my garden creeping,  
 Lurked the earliest bud to see.

All the fruits and all the flowers  
 I would lay them at thy feet ;  
 While thy sweet smiles blessed the hours,  
 Hope within the heart would beat.

Ye are fading, ye sweet roses,  
 From my love ye never sprung ;  
 Bloom to him who all hope loses,  
 And whose soul with grief is wrung.”

The opera of “Ermin and Elmira” arose from Goldsmith’s lovely romance introduced into the “Vicar of Wakefield,”<sup>1</sup> which had given us so much pleasure in the happiest times when we had no idea that anything similar awaited us.

I have already inserted some of the poetical productions of that epoch, and only wish they had all been kept together. A continual excitement in the happy season of love, heightened by the entrance of care, gave occasion to songs which expressed throughout nothing overstrained, but always the feeling of the moment. From social songs for festivals to the most trifling presentation verses, all was animated and sympathised with by a refined society ; first joyful, then sorrowful, and finally there was no summit of fortune, no depth of woe, to which a strain was not devoted.

All these inner and outer events, in so far as they may have been able to affect my father unpleasantly, who was less able to hope that he would see that first one, who pleased him, led into his house as a daughter-in-law, my mother managed to put aside in the most prudent and energetic manner. But this “State Lady,” as he used to call her confidentially to his wife, would not suit him in any way.

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<sup>1</sup> The names in the “Vicar of Wakefield” are Edwin and Angelina.

Meanwhile he let the affair take its course and carried on his little chancery right busily. The young lawyer friend, as well as the skilful amanuensis, acquired continually more extension of territory under his firm. Since now, as is known, however, the absentee is not missed ; they let me take my own ways, and sought more and more to establish themselves on a ground where I was not intended to thrive.

Fortunately my own tendencies corresponded with the sentiments and wishes of my father. He had so great a conception of my poetic talent, so much personal joy in the favour which my earliest works had won, that he often conversed with me about new and further undertakings. On the other hand, I did not let him notice any of those social jests and poems of passion.

After, in "Götz von Berlichingen," I had mirrored the symbol of a significant epoch of the world in my own way, I looked carefully round for another such turning-point in political history. The revolt of the Netherlands gained my attention. In "Götz" a capable man sinks under a delusion ; in time of anarchy the well-meaning, mighty spirit is of some significance. In "Egmont" there were firmly grounded conditions which cannot hold out before a strong and well-calculating despotism. To my father I had talked in the most animated way about what was to be done and what I wanted to do, that it gave him an invincible desire to see the piece, already complete in my head, set down on paper, that it might be printed and admired.

In earlier times, when I still hoped to unite Lili to me, my whole activity was turned to the study and practice of civil business ; now it happened that I had to fill up the frightful gulf which separated me from her with what was full of intellect and soul. I therefore actually began to write "Egmont," and indeed not as I did the first, "Götz von Berlichingen," in succession and in order, but after the first introduction I seized at once on the main scene<sup>1</sup> without troubling myself about the casual connections. And so I got on far with my easy way of working ; it is no exaggeration to say, spurred on by my father day and night, since he thought he would see that which was so easily originated, also easily completed.

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<sup>1</sup> The conversation between Alba and Egmont in Act IV.

## BOOK XX

So I continued to work at "Egmont," and while by this means some alleviation came into my passionate condition, so did the presence of a good artist help me over many evil hours, and I here, as so often before, have to thank a vague striving after practical culture for a secret peace of mind at a time when it could not otherwise have been hoped for.

John Melchior Kraus,<sup>1</sup> born in Frankfort, educated in Paris, had just come back from a short journey into the north of Germany ; he visited me, and I felt at once the impulse and the need of attaching myself to him. He was a cheerful epicurean, whose ready and refreshing talent had found the right school in Paris.

For the Germans were well received there at that time. Philip Hackert lived there well respected and in comfortable circumstances ; the faithful German method by which he executed landscapes, sketching from Nature successfully water-colours and oils, was very welcome as the opposite to a practical manner into which the French had fallen. Wille, highly honoured as a copperplate engraver, gave some ground and basis to the German merit. Grimm, already influential, helped his countrymen not a little. Pleasant walks, so as to sketch directly from Nature, were undertaken, and so many good things were accomplished and prepared.

Boucher and Watteau, two born artists whose works, though hovering in the spirit and style of the time, were always found to be highly respectable, were inclined to the new revelation, and even actively seizing upon it, though in jest and by way of experiment. Greuze, living quietly by himself in his family circle, and fond of representing such domestic scenes, delighted with his own works, rejoiced in an honoured and easy pencil.

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<sup>1</sup> 1737-1806.

All this our Kraus was able very well to take up into his own talent ; he formed himself in company after company, and managed to represent, with great delicacy, family gatherings of friends in the way of portraits ; nor was he less successful in his landscape sketches, which cordially recommended themselves to the eye by their clear outlines, massive shadows, and pleasant colouring ; the inward sense was satisfied by a certain naïve truth, and especially was the friend of Art pleased by his skill in introducing and arranging for a picture that he himself sketched from Nature.

He was most pleasant company ; an equable cheerfulness accompanied him everywhere, obliging without submissiveness, reserved without pride, he was everywhere at home, everywhere beloved, the most active, and at the same time the most easygoing of all mortals.- Endowed with such a talent and character he soon recommended himself in higher circles, and was specially well received at the castle of Baron von Stein in Nassau, on the Lahn, where he assisted an accomplished and very lovely daughter in her artistic efforts, and at the same time enlivened the society in many ways.

After the marriage of this excellent young lady to the Count von Werther, the newly married pair took the artist with them to their considerable estates in Thuringia, and so he got to Weimar. Here he was known and recognised, and his stay desired by the highly cultivated classes there.

As he was active on all sides, on his return to Frankfort he called forth into practical exercise my love of Art, which hitherto had been merely spent on collecting. The neighbourhood of the artist is indispensable to the dilettante, for in the former he sees the complement of his own existence, the wishes of the amateur are fulfilled in the artist.

By a natural talent and by practice I succeeded fairly well in an outline, and what I saw before me was easily shaped into a picture, but I lacked the peculiar plastic power, the skilful effort which lends a body to the outline by well-graduated light and shade. My imitations were rather distant presentiments of some form or other, and my figures, like those light airy beings in Dante's "Purgatory," which, casting no shadows, were affrighted at the shadows of actual bodies.



Through Lavater's physiognomical hunts, for so one may well call the impetuous eagerness with which he laboured to compel all men, not only to the contemplation of physiognomies, but also to artistic or bungling copying of faces, I had acquired the practice of taking portraits of friends on grey paper with black and white chalk. The likeness was not to be mistaken, but it required the hand of my artistic friend to make them come out from the dark background.

By turning over the pages, and looking through the rich portfolio which the good Kraus had brought with him from his travels, we had the most delightful conversation when he laid before us sketches of landscapes and persons of the Weimar circle and its neighbourhood.

I, too, was glad to linger here, for it flattered the young man to see so many pictures only as the text of a repeated circumstantial invitation : " They would be glad to see me there."

He knew very pleasantly how to animate his greetings and invitations by looking at the portraits of the people there. One successful oil-painting represented the band-master Wolf at the piano, and his wife behind him preparing to sing ; the artist himself contrived to explain in a forcible way how warmly this worthy pair would receive me. Among his sketches were several relating to the wood and mountain scenery about Bürgel. An honest forester, perhaps more out of love for his graceful daughters than for himself, had opened social promenades there through rough masses of rock, thickets, and strips of forest by means of bridges, balustrades, and soft paths ; you saw women in their white garments on the pleasant ways, and not without attendants. In one young man could be recognised Bertuch, whose serious designs upon the eldest daughter could not be denied, and Kraus did not take offence if you ventured to refer a second young man to himself and his budding affection for the sister.

Bertuch, as the disciple of Wieland, had so distinguished himself in acquirements and activity that he, already established as the private secretary of the Duke, had the very best prospects for the future. We talked at length of Wieland's uprightness, cheerfulness, and good humour ; his fine literary and poetical designs were fully touched upon, and the influence of the " Merkur " throughout Germany

discussed ; many names were brought forward in a literary, political, and social point of view, and among them Musaus, Kirms, Berendis, and Ludecus. Of the women, Wolf's wife and a widow of Kotzebue, with a lovely daughter and a bright boy, were gloriously and characteristically drawn, along with many others. Everything pointed to a fresh and active life of literature and art.

And so by degrees was described the element upon which the young Duke was to work on his return ; such a state of things the lady protectress<sup>1</sup> had prepared ; but as regards the execution of weightier affairs, all was left to the conviction and vigour of the future regent, as is the duty under such provincial administrations. The horrible ruins caused by the burning of the castle were already looked upon as occasion for new activities. The mining operations at Ilmenau, which were suspended, were now made profitable again by the expensive support of the deep shaft ; the Academy of Jena, which had remained somewhat behind the spirit of the age, and was threatened with the loss of some very capable teachers, as well as much else, roused a noble *esprit de corps*. Men were looking around for persons who, in the upward struggle of Germany, could be called to advance such a variety of good, and throughout the prospect appeared as fresh as a vigorous and lively youth could wish. And it seemed sad to invite a young princess,<sup>2</sup> without the dignity of a suitable building, into a very ordinary dwelling, built for quite other purposes ; still the beautifully situated, well arranged country houses, like Ettersburg, Belvedere, and other eligible seats of pleasure, gave enjoyment for the present, and hope of showing productive and agreeable activity in the natural mode of life which at times had become a necessity.

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We have seen in the course of this Biography how the child, the boy, the youth has endeavoured by different ways to approach the super-sensual, first looking with an affection to natural religion, then clinging closely with love to a

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<sup>1</sup> The mother, the famous Duchess Amalia.

<sup>2</sup> The Duchess Louise, whom Karl August was to marry.

positive one ; further, by concentrating himself makes trial of his own powers, and joyfully gives himself up to the general faith. Whilst he roamed to and fro in the middle spaces of these regions, sought and looked around him, he was met by much which did not seem to belong to either of them, and he believed that he saw more and more distinctly that it is better to turn away one's thoughts from the Immense and Incomprehensible.

He thought that he discovered in Nature, animate and inanimate, with soul and without soul, something which was only manifested in contradictions, and therefore could not be grasped under one conception, still less under one word. It was not godlike, for it seemed unreasonable ; not human, for it had no understanding ; not devilish, for it was beneficent ; not angelic, for it showed malicious pleasure. It resembled chance, for it exhibited no consequence ; it was like Providence, for it hinted at connection. Everything which limits us seemed by it to be penetrable ; it seemed to sport in an arbitrary fashion with the necessary elements of our being ; it contracted time and expanded space. Only in the impossible did it seem to find pleasure, and the possible it seemed to thrust from itself with contempt.

This principle, which seemed to step in between all other principles, to separate them and to unite them, I named Dæmonic, after the example of the ancients, and of those who had become aware of something similar. I sought to save myself before this fearful principle, by fleeing, as was my custom, behind an image.

Among the special parts of the history of the world, which I studied with care, were the events which afterwards made the United Netherlands so famous. I had diligently examined the sources, and sought as far as possible to instruct myself at first hand, and to represent everything all living before me. The situation appeared to me in the highest degree dramatic, and as the principal figure, about whom the others grouped themselves most happily, Count Egmont came before me, whose human and chivalric greatness pleased me most.

But for my purpose it was necessary to transform him into a character possessing such qualities as would adorn a youth better than a man in years, an unmarried man, better than the father of a family, one who was independent

rather than one who, though freely minded, is limited by various relations.

When I had now in my thoughts made him youthful and liberated him from all conditions, I gave him boundless love of life, unlimited self-confidence, the gift of attracting all men to himself, and so of winning the favour of the people, the silent attachment of a princess, the spoken one of a child of Nature, the sympathy of a prudent statesman, and of gaining over to himself the son of his greatest adversary.

The personal bravery which distinguishes the hero is the basis on which his whole life rests, the ground and soil from which it sprung. He knows no dangers, and is dazzled by the approach of the greatest. Through enemies who surround us perhaps we strike our way through, but the nets of state policy are harder to break. The Dæmonic element, which is in the play on both sides, in the conflict of which the lovely goes under and the hated triumphs, and then the prospect that out of this a third will spring, which will correspond to the wish of all men, this it is which has procured for the piece, not, indeed, at its first appearance, but later and at the right time, the favour which it now enjoys. And so here, for the sake of many beloved readers, I will anticipate myself and, as I do not know if I can come to speak of it again, will express something of which I became convinced later on.

Although that Dæmonic element can manifest itself in all corporeal and incorporeal things, indeed even in animals expresses itself most remarkably, yet it stands especially in the most wonderful connection with man, and forms a power which, if not opposed to the moral order of the world, yet crosses it so that one may be regarded as the warp and the other as the woof.

For the phenomena which are hereby produced there are numerous names; for all philosophies and religions have endeavoured in prose and poetry to solve this riddle, and finally to settle the thing which still remains for them henceforward unassailed.

But the Dæmonic element appears most fearfully when it comes forward predominatingly in some man. During my life I have been able to observe several, partly near and partly at a distance. They are not always the most excellent men either as regards intelligence or talents, and they seldom

recommend themselves by goodness of heart ; but a tremendous power issues from them, and they exercise an incredible dominion over all creatures, indeed, even over the elements, and who can say how far such influence will extend. All united moral powers are of no avail against it ; in vain all the more enlightened part of mankind make them suspect as either deceivers or deceived, the mass will be attracted by them. Seldom or never do contemporaries find their equals, and they are to be overcome by nothing but by the universe itself with which they began the struggle, and from such remarks that strange but monstrous proverb may have arisen : *Nemo contra Deum, nisi Deus ipse*.

From these loftier reflections I return to my own little life for which also strange events were at hand, clothed at least with a demoniac appearance. From the summit of the Gotthard, turning my back on Italy, I had returned home, because I could not give up Lili. An affection which is based on the hope of mutual possession, of an enduring life union does not die out at once ; nay, rather it is nourished by the consideration of the reasonable desires and honest hopes which one cherishes.

It lies in the nature of the thing that in such cases the maiden becomes reconciled sooner than the youth. As the descendants of Pandora, to beautiful children the desirable gift has been allotted of charming and enticing, and more through Nature, with half-purpose, than through affection, and indeed with malice, of gathering men around them, whereby they often run the risk, like the magician's apprentice, of being frightened by the flood of their admirers. And then at last a choice must be made, one must be exclusively preferred, one must lead home the bride.

And how accidental is that which gives a direction to the choice and determines the selecting maiden. I had renounced Lili from conviction, but love made me suspect this conviction. With the same idea Lili had taken leave of me, and I had entered upon the beautiful journey to distract my mind, but it actually produced the opposite effect.

As long as I was absent I believed in the separation, but did not believe in the permanent parting. All memories, hopes, and wishes had a free play. Now I came back, and as the reunion of those who freely and joyfully love one

another is a heaven, so the meeting again of two persons separated only on rational grounds is an intolerable purgatory, a forecourt of hell. When I came back into the neighbourhood of Lili, I felt all those misunderstandings doubled which had disturbed our relations ; when I came once more before her it lay heavy on my heart that she was lost for me.

I therefore decided once more on flight, and there was nothing I could desire more than that the young ducal pair of Weimar should come from Carlsruhe to Frankfort, and that I, according to the invitations which I had from time to time, should follow them to Weimar. On the side of their majesties there had always been maintained a gracious, even a confiding, attitude towards me, which I, on my side, returned with passionate thanks. My attachment to the Duke was from the first moment, my reverence for the princess whom I had known so long, but only by reputation, my desire to show some friendly service to Wieland, who had behaved so liberally to me, and on the spot to make amends for my half-wilful, half-accidental incivilities, were motives enough to charm and even to impel a youth who was now free from passion. But it is now to be added that I had to flee from Lili by whichever way I would, whether to the south, where the daily narratives of my father had pictured the most glorious heaven of Art and Nature, or to the north, whither so important a circle of distinguished men invited me.

The young princely pair had now reached Frankfort on their return. The court of the Duke of Meiningen was there at the same time, and by him and by the Privy Councillor von Dürkheim, who accompanied the young prince, I was received in the most friendly manner. But that there should not be wanting some singular event, according to my youthful habit, a misunderstanding threw me into an unbelievable, though tolerably cheerful dilemma.

The majesties of Weimar and of Meiningen lived in one hotel. I was invited to dinner. The Court of Weimar so preoccupied my mind that it did not occur to me to make any further inquiry, for I was not conceited enough to suppose that any notice would be taken of me on the side of Meiningen. I go well dressed to the Roman Emperor, find the rooms of the Weimar company empty, and when I was told they were with those of Meiningen, I betake myself thither and am kindly received. I suppose that this is a

visit before dinner, or perhaps that they are going to dine together, and I await the issue. But suddenly the Weimar suite sets itself in motion, which I also follow ; but they do not go into their apartments but downstairs into their carriages, and I find myself alone in the street.

Now, instead of inquiring into the matter in an adroit and prudent fashion and seeking some explanation, I went, in my determined way, at once homewards, where I found my parents at dessert. My father shook his head, my mother sought to excuse me as much as possible. She confided to me in the evening that my father had said, after I had gone away, that he wondered very much how I, generally acute enough, would not see that they only wanted in that quarter to tease and shame me. But this did not disturb me, for I had already met Herr von Dürkheim, who, in his mild manner, had brought graceful and humorous reproaches against me. Now I was awakened from my dream, and had the opportunity of thanking them handsomely for the favour extended to me, contrary to my hope and expectation, and of asking forgiveness.

After therefore I had yielded to these friendly offers from good grounds, the following arrangement was made. A cavalier who remained behind in Carlsruhe, who was to wait for a landau carriage made in Strasburg, was to meet on a certain day in Frankfort. I was to hold myself in readiness to set off at once with him for Weimar. The cheerful and gracious farewell which I received from the young nobles, the friendly behaviour of the courtiers made me very desirous of this journey, for which the road seemed to smooth itself so pleasantly.

But here, too, by accident, such a simple arrangement became complicated, confused by my passionate eagerness, and almost wholly ruined. For after I had taken leave everywhere, and announced the day of my departure, had then packed up, not forgetting my unprinted manuscripts, I awaited the hour which was to bring along the aforesaid friend in the new carriage and carry me into a new neighbourhood and into new relations. The hour passed, the day also, and since I, to avoid taking leave again and being overrun with visits, had given myself out as absent from that morning, I was obliged to keep still in the house in my own room, and thus found myself in a strange situation.

But since solitude and narrow space had always something in them favourable for me, because I was compelled to make use of such hours, so I wrote away at my "Egmont," and brought it almost to a close. I read it aloud to my father, who acquired a quite special liking for this piece and wished nothing so much as to see it finished and printed, because he thought that the good fame of his son would thereby be increased. Something of this kind to quiet and content him was necessary, for he made the most critical comments about the staying away of the carriage. He maintained once more that the whole thing was an invention, did not believe in any new landau, and considered the cavalier who had remained behind was a phantom of the air ; all this he gave me to understand only indirectly ; on the other hand, he tormented himself and my mother more fully, as he regarded the whole thing as an amusing joke on the part of the Court, which, in consequence of my improprieties, they practised on me so as to insult and shame me, as I now, instead of the expected honour, had to sit in disgrace.

I at first held firmly to my faith, congratulated myself on these solitary hours disturbed neither by friends nor strangers nor by any kind of social distraction, and wrote on vigorously at "Egmont," if not without inward agitation. And this frame of mind was perhaps good for the piece itself, which, moved by so many passions, could not well have been written by a person entirely devoid of passion.

So a week went by, and I don't know how many more, and this complete imprisonment began to be irksome to me. For many years accustomed to live in the open air, associated with friends with whom I stood in the most sincere and busiest mutual relations, in the neighbourhood of a beloved one, from whom I had indeed resolved to part, but who, so long as it was possible for me to approach her, drew me powerfully to herself. All this began to unsettle me so much that it threatened to diminish the attractive power of my tragedy and to arrest its poetic productive power owing to my impatience. Already for several evenings it was not possible for me to remain at home. Disguised in a large cloak I stole round the city, past the houses of my friends and acquaintances, not forbearing to walk even up to Lili's window. She lived on the ground floor of a corner house, the green shutters were down, but I could easily notice



that the lights stood in their usual place. I soon heard her singing at the piano, it was the song : " Ah, against my will why dost draw me ! " which had been written for her hardly a year before. It seemed to me she sang it with more expression than ever, I could understand it clearly word for word. I had pressed my ear as closely as the convex lattice would permit. After she had sung to the end, I saw by the shadow which fell upon the shutters that she had stood up ; she walked to and fro, but I vainly sought to catch the outline of her lovely person through the thick network. Only my firm resolve to take myself away, not to trouble her by my presence, really to renounce her, and the thought what a strange sensation my reappearance would make, could have decided me to leave so dear a neighbourhood.

Still some more days passed away, and the conjecture of my father gained more and more probability, since not even a letter came from Carlsruhe to explain the cause of the delay of the carriage. My poetry came to a standstill, and now my father had fair game in the restlessness with which I was inwardly distracted. He represented to me the thing could not now be changed ; my box was packed, he would give me money and credit to go to Italy, but I must quickly decide to start. In such a weighty affair, doubting and hesitating, I finally agreed that if by a certain hour neither carriage nor message came, I would set out, and first indeed to Heidelberg, from there, however, not through Switzerland again, but rather through the Grisons or the Tyrol over the Alps.

Strange things must indeed happen if planless youth, which is so easily misled, is also driven on a false path by a passionate error of age. Yet it is the case above all with youth and life that we learn first to see through the strategy when the campaign is over. In the ordinary course of business such an accident would be easily explained, but we conspire too readily with error against what is naturally probable, just as we shuffle the cards before we deal them, so that chance may have its full share in the thing, and so there arises the element in which and upon which the Dæmonic so loves to work, and it plays with us only so much worse as we have more foreboding of its approach.

The last day had passed, and the next morning I was to

start on my journey, and now I was infinitely moved to see my friend Passavant once again, who had just come back from Switzerland, for he really would have had reason to be angry if I had injured our intimate confidence by keeping myself entirely secret. I requested him by means of an unknown person to meet me by night at a certain place, where, enveloped in my cloak, I arrived before he did ; but he did not fail, and if he wondered at the appointment, he wondered still more over the person whom he found at the place. His joy was equal to his astonishment ; conversation and consultation were not to be thought of ; he wished me success on my Italian journey, we parted, and the next day I saw myself early on the mountain road.

I had several reasons for going to Heidelberg, one was sensible, because I had heard that the Weimar friend would come from Carlsruhe through Heidelberg, and when we had arrived at the post, I at once left a note which was to be handed to a cavalier, who should be travelling through in the way described ; the second was one of passion and related to my earlier connection with Lili. In fact, Mlle Delf, who had been the confidante of our attachment, indeed, the mediator with the parents of a serious alliance, lived there, and I prized it as the greatest good fortune before I left Germany to be able once again to talk over those happy times with a worthy, patient, and indulgent friend.

I was well received and introduced into many families, and I was particularly pleased with the family of the Warden of the Forest, Von W——. The parents were dignified, comfortable persons, one of the daughters resembled Frederica. It was just the time of the vintage, the weather beautiful, and all my Alsatian feelings were revived again in the lovely Rhine and Neckar valley. This time I had experienced what was strange in myself and others, but it was all still in an incipient state, no result of life had shaped itself in me, and the Infinite, of which I was conscious, confused me much more. But in society I was the same as ever, perhaps even more agreeable and entertaining. Here in the open air among joyful men I sought again the old sports which for youth remain ever new and charming. With an earlier and not yet extinguished love in my heart I excited sympathy without wishing to do so, even when I

was silent about it, and so in this circle I became at home, and indeed necessary to it, and forgot that after talking away a couple of evenings I had resolved to continue my journey.

Mlle Delf was one of those persons' who, without being exactly intriguing, always wish to have some business, to be employing others, and to be carrying through now this now another object. She had formed a sound friendship for me, and could tempt me all the more to stay longer, since I lived in her house, where she could offer all kinds of inducements for my stay, and put all kinds of obstacles in the way of my departure. When I wanted to turn the conversation upon Lili, she was not so pleasant and sympathetic as I had hoped. She rather praised our mutual resolution of separating under these circumstances, and maintained that one must yield to the unavoidable, banish the impossible from one's mind, and look around for some new interest in life. Full of plans as she was, she had not wished to leave this to chance, but she had already formed a design for my future conduct, from which I saw that her last invitation to Heidelberg had not been so purposeless as it appeared.

The Electoral Prince Charles Theodore, who had done so much for the arts and sciences, resided still at Mannheim, and just because the court was Catholic, but the country Protestant, the latter party had every reason to strengthen itself by vigorous and hopeful men. Now I must go, in God's name, to Italy, and there form my views on Art matters ; meanwhile they would labour for me, it would show itself on my return whether the budding affection of Frl. von W—— had grown or been extinguished, and whether it would be advisable, through an alliance with a family of position, to establish myself and my fortunes in a new Fatherland.

All this indeed I did not reject, but my planless nature could not wholly harmonise with the purposeful way of my friend ; I enjoyed the pleasant feeling of the moment, Lili's image hovered before me waking and dreaming, and mingled with everything else which could have pleased or distracted me. But now I summoned before my soul the seriousness of my great travelling undertaking, and decided in a gentle and agreeable way to set myself free, and in a few days to continue my journey farther.

Until late in the night Mlle Delf had been representing to me her plans, and what they were willing to do for me, and I could not but gratefully respect such sentiments, although the intention of a certain circle, strengthening itself through me and my possible influence at Court, was not to be mistaken. We separated about one o'clock. I had not slept long but soundly, when the horn of a postilion, who stopped before the house, awakened me. Immediately upon that Mlle Delf appeared with a light and a letter in her hands, and stepped before my bed. "Here we have it," she cried; "read it, and tell me what it is. Surely it comes from the Weimar people. If it is an invitation, do not follow it, but remember our conversation." She left me reluctantly. Without opening the letter, I looked before me for a while. The express came from Frankfort—I knew the seal and hand. The friend had then arrived there. He invited me, and our want of faith and uncertainty had made us hurry unduly. Why should one not wait in a quiet civilised place for a man who had been definitely announced, and whose journey might have been delayed by so many accidents. Scales, as it were, fell from my eyes. All the past kindness, favour, and confidence came up livingly before me; I was almost ashamed of my strange side-leap. Now I opened the letter and all had happened naturally enough. My missing guide had waited for the new carriage which was to come from Strasburg day after day, hour after hour, as we had waited for him, then for the sake of business he had gone to Frankfort by way of Mannheim, and to his dismay had not found me there.

By an express he at once sent the hasty letter, proposing that I should instantly return after the mistake was explained, and save him from the shame of going to Weimar without me.

Much as my understanding and disposition inclined me to this side, there was still no lack of weighty counterpoise to my new direction. My father had laid out for me a fine plan of travel, and had given me a little library which should prepare and guide me on the spot. In leisure hours I had had no other entertainment hitherto, even on my last little journey in the coach I had thought of nothing else. Those glorious objects, which from youth up I had got to know through narratives and imitations of all sorts, gathered them-

selves before my soul, and I knew of nothing more desirable than to approach them while I withdrew decidedly from Lili.

Meanwhile I had dressed myself and walked up and down in my room. My serious hostess entered. "What am I to hope?" she cried. "Dearest," said I, "say no more to me, I have decided to return; the grounds for this I have weighed by myself, to repeat them would be fruitless. The resolution must be taken at last, and who shall take it but he whom it most concerns."

I was moved and so was she, and there was a violent scene, which I ended by ordering my servant to engage the post-coach. In vain I begged my hostess to calm herself, and to transform the jesting departure which I took of the company the evening before into a real one; to consider that it was to be regarded as a visit, a postponement for a short time, that my Italian journey was not given up, my return that way was not precluded. She would hear of nothing, and disquieted me still more, deeply moved as I was. The coach stood before the door, everything was packed, the postilion let sound the usual signs of impatience; I tore myself away; she would not let me go, and brought forward all the arguments of the present with so much art that, finally impassioned and inspired, I shouted out the words of Egmont<sup>1</sup>: "Child! Child! No more! Lashed as by invisible spirits the sun steeds of time go on with the light car of our destiny, and nothing remains for us but bravely and composedly to hold fast the reins, and now to the right, now to the left, from a rock here, from a precipice there, to avert the wheels. Whither is he going, who knows? Scarcely can he remember whence he came!"

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<sup>1</sup> "Egmont," Act II.

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